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Sabastian Sawe's incredible feat of breaking the 2-hour barrier has 'definitely changed the way we look at marathon running', **Indian record holder Sawan Barwal tells TOI,** P 16

Former champions India blank Australia 5-0 in men's Group A clash to assure themselves of a quarterfinal berth in Thomas Cup in Denmark. Lakshya Sen began the team's march with 21-14, 21-16 win over Ephraim Stephen Sam, P 15

China blocks Meta's acquisition of AI startup Manus, in an unexpected move to reverse a deal that apparently aroused Beijing's concerns about the transfer of advanced technology, P 14

Real Madrid forward **Kylian Mbappe suffers a hamstring injury during the 1-1 draw at Real Betis, weeks before the start of the World Cup.** The 27-yr-old France captain may miss the rest of Real's season, P 16

Kejriwal 'recuses' from hearing before HC judge Sharma

Former Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal has decided to boycott excise case hearings before HC judge Swarana Kanta Sharma, **reports Alok K N Mishra.** In a four-page letter to judge Sharma, the AAP chief said he would not participate in the proceedings before her related to excise policy case, neither in person nor through his lawyer. His decision came days after the HC judge rejected his plea seeking her recusal from hearing the liquor policy case. **P 5**

Hafiz's close aide & key LeT figure shot dead in Pak

Sheikh Yousaf Afridi, a key LeT figure and a close aide of 26/11 Mumbai terror attack mastermind Hafiz Saeed, was shot dead by unidentified gunmen in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, police said on Monday. A police source said unknown armed assailants opened indiscriminate fire on Afridi, resulting in his death on the spot. **P 14**

RS chairman accepts merger of AAP MPs into BJP

Rajya Sabha chairman C P Radhakrishnan has accepted the merger of seven AAP MPs with BJP — taking the governing party's strength in the 245-member upper House to 113. AAP's strength in the House is now three. AAP said it would move court if the basis of the merger is not clarified. **P 5**

Five more districts carved out in Ladakh

The number of districts in Ladakh has gone from two to seven with addition of Nubra, Sham, Changthang, Zanskar and Drass, to Leh and Kargil. This is to "strengthen grassroots governance". **P 5**

UP: Mob lynches man after car hits woman

A 36-year-old businessman was lynched by a mob on Sunday after he stepped out of his car to check on a woman he had hit. She was washing utensils along the road in Phulpur area of Varanasi. **P 5**

Chinnaswamy CCTV cameras sabotaged

Two employees of a digital service-providing firm sabotaged 240 CCTV cameras at Chinnaswamy Stadium on April 24, over payment dispute. The disruption occurred before the RCB vs Gujarat Titans match. **P 2**

Not so lucky bustard? Chick goes missing

Gujarat's first great Indian bustard (GIB) chick to be born in the wild in a decade, and for that reason the most protected hatchling, is missing. The population of the bird has dwindled to just 3 females in Gujarat. **P 5**

Hormuz, end to war, N-talks: Iran peace plan in that order

Rubio Rejects Strait Opening With Riders

Iran has offered to end its chokehold on the Strait of Hormuz in exchange for the US lifting its blockade on the country and an end to the war, two regional officials said Monday. Under the proposal, discussions on the larger question of Iran's nuclear programme would come later.

US President Trump seems unlikely to accept the offer. The existing ceasefire keeps the US and Iran in a fragile standoff over the strait.

Iran's proposal was first reported by the Axios news outlet. It would push negotiations on the country's nuclear programme to a later date. Trump said one of the major reasons he went to war was to deny Iran the ability to develop nuclear weapons.

Trump told journalists Saturday that after he called off a trip by his envoys to Pakistan, Iran sent a "much better" proposal. He did not elaborate but stressed that one of his conditions is that Iran "will not have a nuclear weapon".

Iran insists its programme is peaceful, but US wants to remove its stockpile of highly enriched uranium, which could be used to build a bomb should Tehran decide to do so.

US secretary of state Marco Rubio said a purported offer from Iran to reopen Hormuz under strict conditions is not acceptable to the US or others. In an interview with Fox News on Monday, Rubio said, "What they mean by opening the straits is, yes, the straits are open, as long as you coordinate with Iran, get our permission, or we'll blow you up and you pay us." AGENCIES

FULL COVERAGE: P 14

▶Continued on page 14

IRANIAN MIN MEETS PUTIN IN MOSCOW

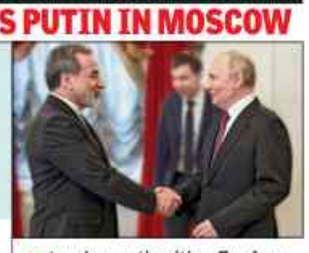


Photo: AP

- **Iranian foreign minister Araghchi arrived in Moscow Monday and met President Vladimir Putin** (right) who said Russia would 'do everything that serves your interests... so that peace can be achieved'
- Araghchi said talks had hit a dead end due to US's 'excessive demands', adds that **Tehran is looking into Trump's request for negotiations**
- With no prospect of talks resuming soon, oil prices climbed to a 2-week high. Brent crude was **over $108 a barrel**
- Iranian authorities **fired on Togo-flagged oil and chemical tanker** on April 25, **all 17 Indian crew onboard safe,** said India's shipping ministry
- **Sensex and Nifty rebounded by nearly 1%** on Monday, snapping 3-day falling streak

'I'm not a rapist': Trump outburst in interview

I'm not a rapist. I didn't rape anybody..I'm not a paedophile," President Trump lashed out at a journalist who was interviewing him after Saturday's shooting at the White House Correspondents' dinner and reading from the shooter's purported manifesto, **reports Chidanand Rajghatta.** "I am no longer willing to permit a paedophile, rapist, and traitor to coat my hands with his crimes," the suspect, Cole Allen, wrote, without taking names. Allen was arraigned Monday on charges of trying to assassinate the president and two firearms crimes.

Trump went on to call CBS 60 Minutes correspondent Nora O'Donnell "a disgrace". Amid concern over the delay in evacuating him — VP Vance was moved out before — Trump said he may be to blame by hesitating to follow agents' instructions. **P 14**

PM sees 'historic change' in West Bengal; Protect your rights: Didi

Bengal readied for the second and final phase of voting Wednesday as campaigning ended Monday, with PM Modi saying he was "confident" of a "historic change" in Bengal, while CM Mamata Banerjee reminded voters of how they were "harassed" and made to queue up during SIR process and urged them to stand in a line once more to defeat BJP.

▶ FULL COVERAGE: PAGE 16

"I request all of you to give your response through your vote. This is a fight to protect your rights...," she said.

"I sensed the mood of the people of Bengal wherever I went. I am confident that I have to be present here at the oath-taking ceremony after May 4 (results day)," Modi told a rally in Barrackpore, his last campaign meeting. India's prosperity, he said, is incomplete without "purvoday (rise of the east)". TNN

Spl NIA court sentences 2022 M'luru cooker blast mastermind to 10-yr RI

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: A special National Investigation Agency (NIA) court Monday handed a 10-year rigorous imprisonment sentence to Mohammed Shariq, the prime accused in the 2022 Mangaluru pressure cooker blast case.

The court slapped a fine of Rs 94,000 on Shariq, presently lodged at Bengaluru Central Prison. Last Dec, he pleaded guilty with the special court. On Nov 19, 2022, an improvised explosive device kept in a pressure cooker exploded in an autorickshaw in Kankanady area of Mangaluru. NIA claimed Shariq intended to plant the bomb at Kadri Manjunatha temple here to foment communal tension.

An NIA chargesheet said the bomb exploded more than 80 minutes early because of a mix-up while scheduling the timer: Instead of 90 minutes, they had set 9 minutes for the bomb to go off.

▶ 45 witnesses, P 3

INT'L TERROR LINKS

Nov 19, 2022 | A low-intensity **blast occurs inside a moving auto in Naguri, Mangaluru.** Passenger Mohammed Shariq & driver Purushotham Poojary sustain burn injuries

Nov 20 | Police call **blast an act of terror,** name Shariq prime suspect

Nov 23 | Govt **hands over probe to NIA** due to the domestic and international links of the plot

Jan 2023 | NIA conducts raids across multiple states. Searches reveal **Shariq's handlers were based abroad** & linked to int'l terror modules

May 2023 | Probe agency files a chargesheet against Shariq, detailing his process of **buying materials for explosives online**

Mystery over death of Mum couple & 2 daughters hrs after having watermelon

Mumbai: A Saturday night family feast turned tragic when four members — two teenage sisters and their parents — died hours after eating a watermelon, **report Mateen Hafeez & Eshan Kalyanikar.** While five other relatives had shared biryani-pulao with them at 10.30pm, and reported no symptoms, the fruit was consumed only by these four around 1am, Sunday, city police said.

JJ Hospital doctors said it is "very unlikely" that stale watermelon could cause four deaths and all efforts to save them failed. A doctor involved in their care said three had symptoms typical of food poisoning and their kidneys were severely impacted.

▶ Docs still puzzled, P 8

Visa norms to get easier, 100% duty-free exports as India, NZ ink trade pact

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: India and New Zealand on Monday signed a bilateral trade agreement in what was described as a "once-in-a-generation" opportunity. It is expected to be implemented by the end of the year, and allow 100% duty-free access for goods shipped from the country, along with easier visa rules for students and skilled professionals and freer access for yoga professionals, AYUSH practitioners and musicians.

Besides, New Zealand has committed to invest $20 billion over the next 15 years, with trade minister Todd McClay identifying infrastructure among sectors where some of the investment will be made with govt facilitating the flows. With the agreement in place, both sides are looking to double bilateral trade in goods and services to $5 billion in five years.

FARM, DAIRY OUT

- The pact will provide **duty-free access for India's exports** in textiles, apparel, leather, footwear, gems and jewellery, engineering goods, and processed foods
- **Some goods will only be for export,** in line with India's foreign trade policy
- India has kept its **sensitive farm products, dairy outside ambit of the treaty**

▶ Treaty's ambit, P 13

Sun Pharma buys Organon of US in $12bn deal

Sun Pharma, India's largest pharma company, has struck the biggest-ever overseas pharma deal, acquiring US-listed Organon & Co for $11.8 billion (Rs 98,000 crore) in an all-cash transaction. The deal broadens Sun Pharma's therapeutic breadth and geographic reach in one sweep, adding over 140 high- growth markets, including China. **P 13**

No limit, dad must pay edu expenses of his children at actuals: K'taka HC

Vasantha.Kumar @timesofindia.com

Bengaluru: Quashing a Bengaluru family court order that had capped educational expenses at Rs 60,000 per month, Karnataka HC said such costs are based on multiple variable components — including fees, transport, books, uniforms and incidental charges. Limiting such costs would run contrary to the welfare of children.

Pronouncing the verdict, Justice K Manmadha Rao directed a man to pay for the educational expenses of his children at actuals, as demanded by the school, and to reimburse his wife for any payment made by her upon submission of proof. The court also modified maintenance, directing the father to pay Rs 15,000 per month to each child, aged 14 and 9, and Rs 40,000 per month to the wife. In addition, he will have to pay Rs 25,000 for litigation costs.

IN THE COURTS

- **Declaring women's right to reproductive autonomy a fundamental right,** SC rules medical termination of an unwanted pregnancy can't be denied on grounds of advanced gestation or normalcy of fetus
- Though SC sympathises with women whose live-in partners have left them, **it says courts can't do much as walking out of such relations isn't an offence**
- **Delhi high court ends criminal proceedings** against Godfrey Phillips India CMD Bina Modi, her guard and lawyer in 2024 son assault case | P 6

▶ Declines to interfere, P 3

A tequila cocktail, please! India leads growth charts

Supriya.Roy@timesofindia.com

Bengaluru: Out of the shot glass and into the mainstream conversation — that's tequila's journey as India now becomes the world's fastest-growing market for the niche drink. India recorded a 31% year-on-year increase in volume and a 40% rise in value for agave-based spirits in 2024-25, the highest growth among 21 markets tracked by a global research firm.

Data from International Wine and Spirits Record, shared exclusively with **TOI,** shows the momentum is expected to continue, with volumes projected to grow at a 14% compound annual rate through 2034, effectively doubling consumption by 2031.

The surge is driven by a mix of premiumisation, shifting consumer preferences, and a growing cocktail culture in urban India. "Consumers are drawn to its variety and versatility," Jason Holway, senior consultant at IWSR, told **TOI.** "It serves as the base for several popular cocktails but can also be drunk neat, particularly at the ultra-premium end."

LIGHTER ALTERNATIVE

- Tequila positioned as **lighter, lower-calorie alternative** to heavier spirits, offering more **experiential way of drinking**
- **60% consumption** of tequila comes **through cocktails**
- Its presence showing up in lifestyle spaces, **from high-end bars to destination weddings**
- At premium end, firms positioning tequila as **aspirational, experience-led product**

▶ Agave spirits, P 13

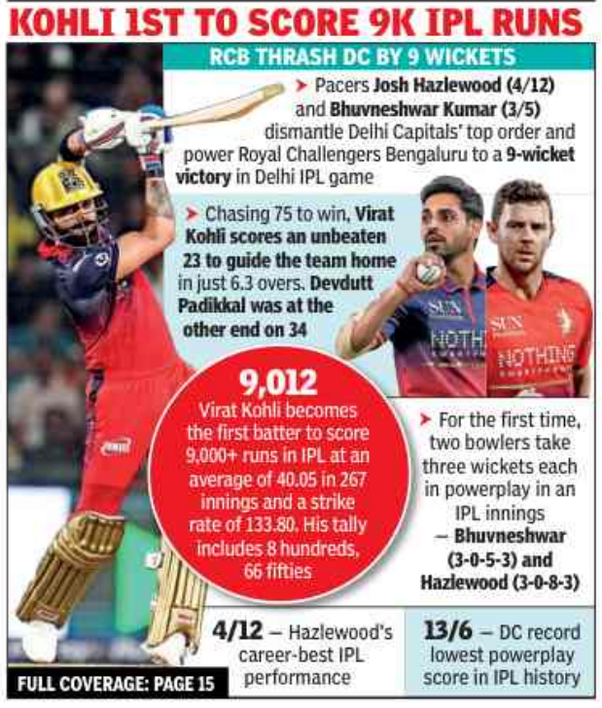
SC: Victim's rights as important as those of accused

New Delhi: Terming a two-decade-old jurisprudence giving primacy to right of accused to fair and speedy trial and their release to avoid prolonged pretrial incarceration as "old-fashioned", SC Monday said the present jurisprudence gives equal weightage to justice for victims of crime, **reports Dhananjay Mahapatra.**

The remark came from a bench of CJI Surya Kant and Justice Joymalya Bagchi on a petition filed by DS Chhokar — a former Haryana MLA and realtor in custody for 16 months for allegedly siphoning hundreds of crores from homebuyers' deposits against promised flats — seeking regular bail after having been turned down by the Punjab and Haryana HC.

▶ Takes priority, P 6

KOHLI 1ST TO SCORE 9K IPL RUNS



RCB THRASH DC BY 9 WICKETS

- Pacers **Josh Hazlewood (4/12)** and **Bhuvneshwar Kumar (3/5)** dismantle Delhi Capitals' top order and power Royal Challengers Bengaluru to a **9-wicket victory** in Delhi IPL game
- Chasing 75 to win, **Virat Kohli scores an unbeaten 23 to guide the team home** in just 6.3 overs. **Devdutt Padikkal was at the other end on 34**
- For the first time, two bowlers take three wickets each in powerplay in an IPL innings — **Bhuvneshwar (3-0-5-3) and Hazlewood (3-0-8-3)**

9,012 Virat Kohli becomes the first batter to score 9,000+ runs in IPL at an average of 40.05 in 267 innings and a strike rate of 133.80. His tally includes 8 hundreds, 66 fifties

4/12 — Hazlewood's career-best IPL performance

13/6 — DC record lowest powerplay score in IPL history

FULL COVERAGE: PAGE 15

Wildfire in Nilgiris rages for 10 days, scorches 5,000 acres

Tysion.B @timesofindia.com

Coimbatore: A wildfire tearing through forests of TN's Nilgiris hill district for over 10 days has scorched nearly 5,000 acres, forcing over 500 personnel to fight flames on foot across steep terrain as strong winds grounded IAF chopper support, officials said Monday.

The blaze is concentrated in Parsons Valley and Pykara ranges, part of Nilgiris biosphere landscape about 500km southwest of Chennai. A fresh fire broke out Monday near Maravakandy dam, stretching already thin resources.

Fire crews, unable to deploy engines in rugged hills, are trekking long distances to beat the flames with branches in conditions that leave many exhausted and dehydrated.

P Sreedharan

The affected forests are home to tigers, elephants and rare plants

▶ Larger animals fled, P 8

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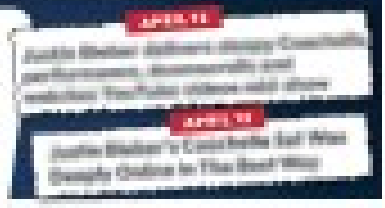
Bangalore Times

MAJAA ಜೋರು WONDERLA

JUSTIN BIEBER'S COACHELLA EXPERIMENT:

Nostalgia, or a new hybrid format?



The protest against Jeff Bezos' Met Gala

2 workers disable 240 stadium cams before IPL match

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: Two employees of a private digital service provider entered M Chinnaswamy Stadium on April 24 and disabled more than 240 CCTV cameras. They allegedly damaged network video recorder (NVR) units and optical fibre connections, disrupting surveillance across entry gates, concourses and other key areas.

MATCH DAY TROUBLE

Soon after the disruption was noticed, services were restored and a police case was filed against the two accused, identified as Manjunath, 37, and Abdul Kalam, 19, employees of IVS Digital Solutions. A police officer said the accused confessed during interrogation that they had a payment issue with the two companies and hence cut the wires of the server room and CCTV cameras. Royal Challengers Bengaluru had given the contract to Staqu Technologies Pvt Ltd, which subleased the maintenance work to IVS Digital Solutions.

SABOTAGE OVER PAYMENT ISSUE

- Disgruntled duo entered M Chinnaswamy Stadium around midday on April 24 and disabled cameras
- Angry over payment issues, they damaged NVR units and optical fibre connections, disrupting surveillance across key areas
- Disruption affected entry gates, concourses and other critical zones before services were restored

PTI

A high-voltage match between Royal Challengers Bengaluru and Gujarat Titans took place at the stadium on April 24.

According to the complaint filed by Aditya Bhat, an employee of Staqu Technologies Pvt Ltd, based in Gurugram, Haryana, more than 240 CCTV cameras were found non-functional at the stadium during a routine morning check. Cameras across critical zones, including entry gates, perimeter areas, the D Corporate Stand, and concourses, were offline. A probe pointed to two individuals — Manjunath and Abdul Kalam.

The duo allegedly entered the stadium around 11.30am using an access card and gained unauthorised entry into the CCTV control room. They damaged the NVR systems and optical fibre connections, including links from the server room to junction boxes near the parking area, effectively crippling the entire surveillance network between 11.30am and 12.30pm. Footage allegedly shows the accused accessing restricted areas and tampering with key infrastructure. The disruption severely impacted real-time monitoring, leaving authorities without crucial CCTV feeds on match day.

Vandalism complaint

The complainant termed the act deliberate vandalism and sought immediate legal action against those involved. Cubbon Park police registered a case under Section 324 (mischief) of Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita. As the offence is a bailable one, the accused were served notice and appeared for questioning Monday. Police have also filed seven cases against those selling fake and black-market tickets.

Property dispute sees woman try to torch brother's house

Bengaluru: A property row escalated into alleged vandalism and an attempt by a woman and her family to torch the house of her brother at Byrasandra in south Bengaluru, police said Monday.

Ashwini S, 35, a resident of 9th Cross, stated in a complaint to police that she and her husband, Umesh, stay with their children on the ground floor of a four-storey building. She said the property belonged to Umesh's father and was now registered in the name of Umesh, who later constructed the upper floors. Umesh's elder sister, Meenakshi, stays in a nearby area along with her family. Umesh and her sister have a civil dispute case pending in court over the property.

Ashwini told police that Meenakshi, along with her husband and children, entered the building premises and vandalised their house, smashing doors and windows. They also destroyed CCTV cameras and Meenakshi allegedly abused them with foul language and issued threats.

Ashwini further accused her sister-in-law of pouring petrol all over the house and threatening to set it ablaze. Ashwini said she immediately called police helpline 112, after which Hoysala station police rushed to the spot and brought the situation under control. An officer said the family often fights over the matter. CCTV footage from before the cameras were damaged is available, he added. TNN

HEAT ARCHIPELAGOS OF B'LURU

Rapid urbanisation has transformed city into a patchwork of heat zones. IISc study links this to glass facades, paved surfaces & concrete structures

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Bengaluru: How badly Bengaluru's once cool climate has been mangled in recent decades is now evident in what scientists describe as the rise of "heat archipelagos" across the city — clusters of extreme heat pockets scattered through the landscape and increasingly merging with each other.

Borrowed from geography, where it refers to chains of islands, the term now paints a stark picture of how heat is fragmenting and spreading across the city.

A team from the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), examining the micro-level relationship between land surface temperature (LST) and land use (LU), has traced this phenomenon to the rapid spread of paved and built-up areas, concomitant with the sharp decline in green cover, open spaces, and waterbodies.

The city is now estimated to have about 200 heat archipelagos, each consisting of 50-70 urban heat islands (UHIs), landscapes significantly warmer than adjoining areas because of glass facades, paved surfaces, and concrete structures.

The study traces a dramatic transformation in Bengaluru's land profile, with built-up area surging from just 8% in 1973 to 87.6% in 2025.

Of the city's 740sqkm area, 545.2sqkm is now categorised as having unfavourable ecological conditions. Land surface temperatures range between 29.8°C (favourable conditions) and 48°C (unfavourable), with the average temperature 38.6°C in peak summer.

Dense built environments

The study attributes this to dense built environments with poor airflow and diminishing tree cover, compounded by the degradation of lakes that once provided natural cooling through evaporation. "Even modest increases in vegetation cover can significantly reduce heat levels, as is the case with the IISc campus or Cubbon Park, Lalbagh, and parts of south and west Bengaluru," explained Prof TV Ramachandra, who co-authored the study with Rajesh Singh Rana, S Vinay, and Bharath H Aithal.

"The city has effectively transitioned from a porous, cooling landscape to a heat-retaining concrete expanse," Prof Ramachandra said, cautioning that unregulated growth has made Bengaluru "greenhouse gas-rich, water-scarce, non-resilient and unliveable," depriving residents of clean air, water, and a healthy environment.

"On the contrary, the vegetation and lakes referred to as heat sinks are only 23.8sqkm of the city's area. The hot spots are not continuous but occur as fragmented patches, forming what is described as an urban heat archipelago," Prof Ramachandra said, adding that the study identifies heat islands across Bengaluru, particularly concentrated in the northern and eastern regions, where their combined impact creates larger heat archipelagos.

Based on these findings, the researchers have also engaged with planning authorities to recommend corrective measures. "We have suggested maintaining 30% open space with green cover at plot level. The govt assured that the outcome of the current research would be incorporated with recommendations in the proposed Master Plan 2031," Prof Ramachandra said.

AI

KEY DATA POINTS

- ~200 heat archipelagos identified across Bengaluru
- Each archipelago contains 50-70 urban heat islands
- Built-up area grew from 8% (1973) to 87.6% (2025)
- 545.2 sqkm of 740sqkm now under unfavourable ecological conditions
- Heat sinks (vegetation + lakes) cover just 23.8sqkm
- Land surface temperatures range from 29.8°C to 48°C
- Average peak summer temperature 38.6°C

VARYING TEMPERATURE AS PER LAND USE

Landscapes with barren and urban land recorded the highest land surface temperatures
Class 1 (C1 – entirely bare soil): **39.9°C**
Class 2 (C2 – entirely urban): **39.7°C**
Class 3 (C3): **39.5°C**
Class 4 (C4): **39.4°C**

Landscapes with mix of urban, barren & vegetation reported low mean temperature
Class 5 (C5): **38.6°C**
Class 6 (C6): **38.4°C**

Decline in temperature observed as proportion of urban land decreases
Class 7 (C7): **38.2°C**
Class 8 (C8): **38°C**
Class 9 (C9): **37.8°C**
Class 10 (C10): **37.6°C**

Lowest temperatures recorded in classes with minimal urban influence
Class 11 (C11): **35.9°C**
Class 12 (C12): **31°C** (lowest)

OVERALL TREND: Higher urban and barren cover → Higher temperatures | Increasing vegetation → Lower temperatures

Source: IISc Study

'What kind of man are you?' HC raps accused filming on Metro

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: "What kind of man are you? You won't leave women to be safe anywhere?" Karnataka high court said Monday while coming down heavily on a social media content creator accused of secretly filming women passengers on Namma Metro trains in the city.

While delivering the sharp rebuke, the court also refused to quash criminal proceedings against the creator, identified as BK Diganth, an accountant. He was arrested by Banashankari police last May for allegedly recording videos of women without their consent and sharing them on Instagram and Telegram under the handle 'Metro Chicks'.

The Instagram handle had close to 6,000 followers, while there were around 1,000 Telegram subscribers, a good chunk of whom had commented on the physical attributes of the women discreetly photographed on trains.

NO RELIEF FOR MAN

Diganth had moved the high court challenging the proceedings against him pending before the II additional chief metropolitan magistrate court (Bengaluru) for offences punishable under Sections 78(2) (stalking), 238(C) (providing false information) of Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) and Section 67 of Information Technology Act. He contended that no offence was made out, as the content shared was no different from visuals captured by CCTV cameras in public spaces. However, his plea ran into strong judicial disapproval.

"What is this 'Metro Chicks'?" asked Justice M Nagaprasanna. Spiking the comparison with CCTV surveillance, he asked: "You take pictures of women from behind and post them online? What nonsense is this?" The court went on to underline that such conduct, carried out without consent and amplified on social media, could not be equated with legitimate surveillance, instead raised serious concerns about privacy invasion and harassment.

Diganth's counsel attempted to challenge the case on technical grounds, arguing that the investigating officer was also the complainant. But the court brushed aside the contention. "Technicality cannot override such acts of yours. Time has come to stop hiding behind technicalities in matters like this," Justice Nagaprasanna said, dismissing the petition at the threshold and allowing criminal proceedings to continue.

Namma Metro Pink Line trials from today

Bengaluru: Critical tests by Research Designs and Standards Organisation (RDSO) of Namma Metro's Pink Line will begin Tuesday, with inspections scheduled till May 12.

According to Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Ltd (BMRCL) officials, after the inspection, RDSO will analyse test data and issue an interim speed certification. This will be followed by inspection by the commissioner of Metro railway safety (CRS), whose report will be submitted to the chief commissioner of railway safety and subsequently to railway board for technical sanction for the new rolling stock. The multi-stage clearance process is expected to take two to three months. After securing clearance, BMRCL will approach the commissioner of Metro railway safety (CMRS) for authorization for opening the line.

So far, BMRCL has received five train sets for the 7-km elevated stretch between Kalena Agrahara and Tavarekere. The 21km corridor from Kalena Agrahara to Nagawara, including the underground section from Dairy Circle to Nagawara, is scheduled for completion by this year-end.

Yellow Line (RV Road-Bommasandra) Monday received its 10th train set from Titagarh Rail Systems. Eight trains are operational on the line; testing of the ninth train will begin soon. TNN

₹80k school fee cash stolen from bus

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Bengaluru: What began as a hopeful effort to secure her children's education ended in heartbreak for a 39-year-old mother, who lost Rs 80,000 in cash that she had borrowed from her younger sister. Thieves allegedly stole the cash while she was boarding or not long after she had boarded a BMTC bus (route number 317) at City Market BMTC stand.

According to the complaint filed by Pankaja, a resident of A Narayanapura in Mahadevapura, her family was facing financial strain and she approached her sister, Rathnamma, for help. On April 23, she visited KIMS Hospital as her cousin had met with an accident and was undergoing treatment there. Her sister, who stays in Hanumanthanagar, invited her to her home as she had shifted to a new house.

At her home, Rathnamma suggested that she take the cash needed to pay her children's school fees instead of coming again for the same. Pankaja took the cash and kept it in her vanity bag. Rathnamma also gave her a bag of rice. Pankaja then took a BMTC bus to Victoria Hospital bus stop from Hanumanthanagar and walked to the City Market BMTC bus stand.

She waited for almost 30 minutes for bus route no. 317 bound for Tin Factory. She last saw the cash a couple of minutes before the bus arrived. While boarding the bus around 12pm, she was pushed by the crowd. She managed to get a seat, but soon noticed a woman in her 70s standing. She gave up her seat to the woman and stood in the crowded bus. Soon, she noticed that her vanity bag's zip was open. She immediately checked inside, only to find the entire Rs 80,000 missing.

Speaking to **TOI**, Pankaja said the BMTC bus driver and conductor were not cooperative when she requested them to stop the bus for 10 minutes to check if someone had stolen her money, and they even refused to show her CCTV camera footage.

A woman constable helped her lodge a complaint. The CCTV camera at the bus stand was not functioning, police told her. City Market police registered a case under BNS Section 303 (theft).

Pankaja has approached the school where her elder son is studying in class 4 and her younger son in LKG, requesting a month's time from them to pay the fees.

Woman & 8-year-old daughter jump into pond, die by suicide

Bengaluru: Four persons, including a mother-daughter duo, drowned in agricultural ponds in Tumakuru and Anekal starting Sunday.

M Suchitra, 11, and her brother M Ravindra, 9, drowned in the agricultural pond at Benakanahalli in Madhugiri, Tumakuru district, Sunday evening. The two were grazing sheep in a field and waded into the pond either to play or to drink water. They were children of agriculturist Manjunath, police said, and since school was closed for summer vacation, the children were helping parents in household chores. After the kids didn't return home, their parents went in search of them and found their bodies.

In the second incident, a 28-year-old homemaker died by suicide along with her eight-year-old daughter at Surya City, Anekal. The deceased are S Lavanya and her only child, S Lakshata.

Lavanya's family accused her husband Sampath of abetting the suicide. "Sampath is a farmer and also runs a hardware shop on Hosur Road. Married in 2017, the couple fought frequently over domestic issues," a police officer said. Cops booked abetment-to-suicide case against Sampath. TNN

TIMES NIE CONGRATULATES SCHOOL TOPPERS OF CLASS 10 EXAMS 2025-26 AND EXTENDS BEST WISHES FOR THE FUTURE

SSLC

School	Topper
Anjali Convent & Nightingale High School, Sunkadakatte	Inchara KJ & Darshini J
Achary Sri Mahapragya High School, NLO	Uthsav R & Sampat JM
Amara Jyothi English School	Deepak Awaradi
Anupama English School, Mahalakshmipuram	Gambhirya S
Assumption School, Rajajinagar	Samarth U
BEL Public School, Jalahalli	Dhanya Sanjay Bangera
Bharath English School, Yelahanka	Rakshitha V
Chinmaya Vidyalaya, St John's Road	Yuvashri Kadiyala
Emmanuel Sugnana Jyothi High School	Niveditha V
Ganga International School, Nelagadaranahalli	Sharath M
GEM School, RT Nagar	Sara Anjum
GHS, Hargadde	Dhanushma
Gokul Vidya Kendra, BSK	Lekhana
Goodwill English High School, Yelahanka	Jayanth P
Janak Vidyalayaa, BG Road	Satish M
Kairalee Nilayam High School, HAL Airport Road	Kammala Dinesh
Kenneth George English School, RT Nagar	Syed Shahzaib
Kids Global School, Marathahalli	Waseem Rafiq Mulla
Lady Wellington, JP Nagar	Charan Thej B
Lawrence High School, Koramangala	Aamina Bi
Lourdes High School, NLO	Bhavana MR
Madonna School, Udayanagar	Shreeya M & Rohan P
Mariam Nilaya High School	Dilip Raju N & Hitesh S
MES Kishore Kendra, Malleshwaram	Chintana U
MMET English Primary & High School	Aathira N Das
MSB Educational Institute, CK Palya	Mufaddal Mustufa Kanchwala
NET Public School, Gavipuram	Thrupthi J Shetty
New Oxford English Public School, Rajajinagar	Deepak B
Oriental English High School, Vidyaranyapura	Heena Kausar
Oxford English High School, Thippasandra	Nithya Shree
Patel Public School, Bellandur	Vignesh R
Raintree School, Jayanagar	Saara Khanum
Raintree School, Mysore Road	Tanushree
Royal Concorde High School, Chelekere	Bhavana S
Royal Public School, Hosur Road	Sudha S Makkanavar
Sai Vidya Mandir, Bettahalasuru	Kusuma Rao & Lekhana R
Samved School, JP Nagar	Falisha Anum
Schoenstatt St Mary's High School, Nagasandra	Chandana M
SFS High School, Hebbagodi	A Jayasuriya
Shama Vidya Shalaa, Okalipuram	Varsha M
Sharada Vidyalaya, TG Halli	Pruthvi GB
Shiksha Niketan, NLO	Sinchanan U Hegde & Aanvi R
Shree Maatha International Public School	Tejas Y
Shree Sharada Vidyaniketana, Arakere	Lakshmi Kumari A
Siri School, Laggere	Thanmayi GS
Sophia School, Air View Colony	Kaushik K Naik
Soundarya School, Havanoor Extn, Dasarahalli	Dhanush B
Sowbhagya English High School, Kavalabyrasandra	Heena Kousar
Sri Sai Vidyalaya, Rajajinagar	Gagan Gowda Y
St Claret High School	Claresha D'souza & Dhanush S
St Javeria High School	Mohammed Noor
St Mary's Convent & High School, T Dasarahalli	Shamitha P
St Thomas School, Whitefield	Vihan Vinay
Standard English School, T Dasarahalli	Nuthan M
The East West School, Basavanagudi	Syeda Hazira Harmain
The New Cambridge High School, RPC	Chanchal L
The Oxford English High School, JP Nagar	Likhith KR
The Regency Public School, Vidyaranyapura	Bhuvana C
Vatican High School, RT Nagar	Ghania Tahreem
Vidya Mandir Public School, Amruthahalli	Charitha N
Vidyabodhini Integrated Public School	Srushti R
Vinodh English High School, Goraguntepalya	Harshini BN
VVS Sardar Patel High School, Rajajinagar	Srikrishna Kavital

CBSE

One World International School, Sarjapur	Anya Dante
Sainik School, Vijayapura	Akul S
Vydehi School of Excellence	Prisha Jahetia
Sri Aurobindo Memorial School, BSK	Nabonita Bagchi
Sri Siddaganga Higher Primary School, Chandra Layout	Anish Prabhu & Tanmayee KR
Sri Jnanakshi Vidyanikethan, RR Nagar	Shreyas S
Princeton High School, Kalyan Nagar	Anika S

Yard work at KSR to disrupt trains for 50 days

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Bengaluru: Rail commuters in the city may face a tough few weeks as yard remodelling work at KSR Bengaluru railway station — approved by the railway board — is set to disrupt train services from

JUNE 16 TO AUG 4

mid-June to early Aug. The scheduled work will cause cancellations of regular services, including express, passenger and Memu trains, forcing travellers and commuters to replan their journey during the period.

South Western Railway (SWR) zone will take up the crucial safety upgrade work at the station from June 16 to Aug 4, officials said. Passengers travelling between Bengaluru and Mysuru are likely to be the worst hit, with five short-distance services on the stretch set to be fully cancelled for 49 days. These services help thousands travel between the cities for work on a daily basis.

The Bengaluru-Mysuru Passenger service, Mysuru Arsikere Passenger, and the Memu service between Bengaluru and Chamarajpet will not operate from June 17 to Aug 4 for a period of 49 days.

In total, 40 services through KSR Bengaluru station will be cancelled during the period for specific days. For seven days, Channapatna-KSR Bengaluru Memu will remain unavailable, and the Bengaluru-Ashokapuram one will be kept off track for five days. Ashokapuram-Bengaluru Express will not be operating for a three-day period from Aug 1-3.

While only five services remain fully cancelled, seven others will terminate at other stations. Train no. 06526 Ashokapuram-KSR Bengaluru Memu will only run till Kengeri for 49 days between June 16 and Aug 3, impacting hundreds who live in the central and eastern parts of the city.

Train 66591/KSR Bengaluru-Kolar Memu, which is depended upon by hundreds, will terminate at Bangalore Cantonment. The Memu running via Chikkaballapur will not go to KSR Bengaluru for 48 days. Among other long-distance routes, train 16593/16594 KSR Bengaluru-Hazur Sahib Nanded Express will end and start its journey from Yelahanka for 49 days between June 17 and Aug 4. According to SWR, 36 other services will skip certain stoppages, and five services will be regulated.

TRAINS THAT ARE FULLY CANCELLED

06269 Mysuru-SMVT Passenger: From June 16 to Aug 3
06270 SMVT- Mysuru Passenger: From June 16 to Aug 3
56265 Arsikere- Mysuru Passenger: From June 16 to Aug 3
56266 Mysuru-Arsikere Passenger: From June 17 to Aug 4
66535 KSR-Channapatna Memu: From June 17 to Aug 4

TOI

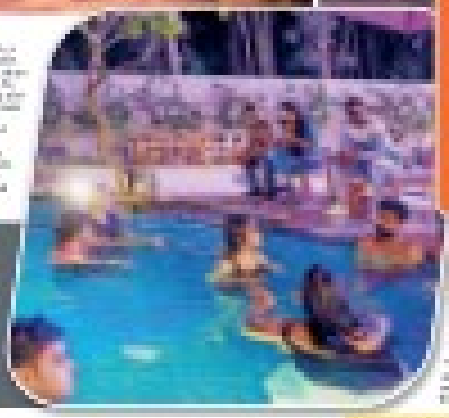
SHORTENED & TERMINATED

66580 Ashokapuram-KSR Memu: June 16 to July 15, July 20 to 30, and Aug 3 | Terminates at Channapatna
06526 Ashokapuram-KSR Memu: June 16 to Aug 3 | Terminates at Kengeri
66579 KSR-Ashokapuram Memu: June 17 to Aug 4 | Terminates at Kengeri
16521 Bangarpet-KSR Memu: June 16 to July 30 | Terminates at KR Pura
16594 Nanded-KSR Express: June 16 to Aug 3 | Terminates at Yelahanka
16593 KSR-Nanded Express: June 17 to Aug 4 | Terminates at Yelahanka
66591 KSR-Kolar Memu: June 17 to Aug 1, and Aug 3 | Terminates at Kengeri

A loving heart is the truest wisdom —Charles Dickens

SWIPE FATIGUE TO REAL MEETS:

Bengaluru's shift to offline connections



Bengaluru 18%

Hyderabad 17%

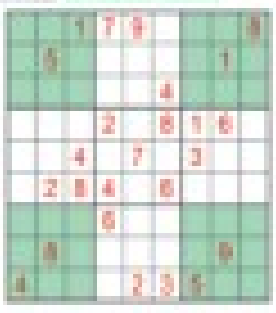
Delhi 11%

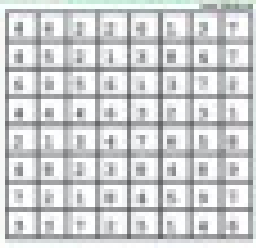
Mumbai 9%

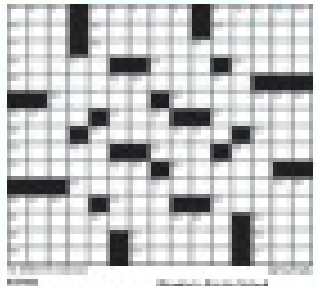
Pune 7%

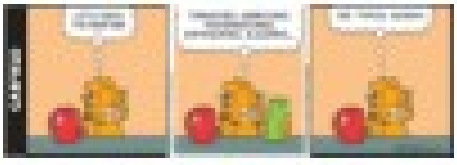
Speed dating: Fast, structured and growing

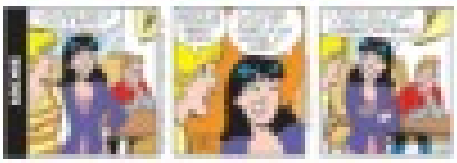
LEISURE

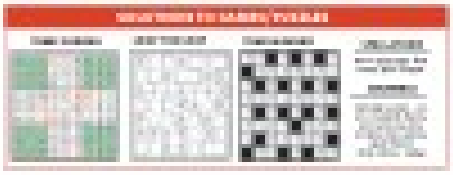












Gridlock to hearing loss: Traffic noise takes toll on Bengalureans

Jahnavi@timesofindia.com

Bengaluru: Traffic-choked Bengaluru is now affecting the hearing health of its residents, with constant exposure to high noise levels increasingly linked to hearing-related ailments.

Doctors say daily exposure to traffic noise — often ranging between 70 and 100 decibels (dB) — is contributing to a gradual but significant rise in hearing problems across age groups.

"The impact of traffic is both significant and underestimated. Bengaluru's traffic noise routinely exceeds safe limits, with monitoring data showing levels often crossing 60-70 dB across residential and commercial zones, and even higher in peak traffic corridors. When the level exceeds 70 dB, there is a possibility of hearing impairment," said Dr Jyotirmay S Hegde, HOD and lead consultant, ENT, Aster Whitefield Hospital.

He added that continuous exposure is a bigger concern. "People are constantly exposed — during commuting, from frequent honking and even while living near busy roads. Studies have shown that the risk of tinnitus increases with every 10 dB rise in traffic noise," he said.

Doctors note that patients with chronic noise exposure often develop symptoms slowly, making early detection difficult. The first sign is typically tinnitus — a persistent ringing in the ears. This is followed by difficulty in understanding speech in noisy environments.

As the condition progresses, individuals may experience muffled hearing or a blocked ear sensation, which can eventually develop into mild-to-moderate sensorineural hearing loss. In addition to these auditory issues, non-auditory symptoms such as headaches, irritability, sleep disturbances, reduced concentration, ear discomfort, and heightened sensitivity to sound are increasingly being reported in clinics.

Beyond the vehicular noise, doctors point to another growing risk: prolonged use of earphones and headphones during commutes.

"People tend to increase the volume of their earphones to block out traffic noise. Over time, this damages the delicate hair cells in the inner ear permanently, leading to tinnitus, reduced hearing clarity and early sensorineural hearing loss. Young adults are particularly affected," said Dr Shantanu Tandon, senior consultant, ENT, Sakra World Hospital.

Dr Jisha K, consultant - ENT, Kauvery Hospital, Marathahalli, pointed out how despite Bengaluru having strict laws on honking and noise levels, enforcement is weak, and actual noise far exceeds permissible limits. "Weak enforcement of noise regulations and the city's dense traffic culture make the problem worse, putting silence zones like schools and hospitals at risk. In short, unchecked traffic noise is steadily eroding Bengaluru's auditory health and overall well-being," she said.

Experts warn that hearing loss — once largely associated with aging — is now being seen among children, teenagers, and young adults.

"Today, irreversible sensorineural hearing loss is appearing in younger populations at an alarming rate due to unsafe listening habits. Exposure to high sound levels can also lead to non-auditory symptoms such as anxiety, fatigue, stress, cardiovascular disease, and sleep disturbances," said Teja Deepak Desai, associate professor at Dr SR Chandrasekhar Institute of Speech and Hearing.

She cited findings from an internal study conducted at the institute between 2020 and 2025. "Hearing loss caused by loud sounds builds up gradually. Sounds above 85 dBA — about the level of heavy traffic — can damage hearing with prolonged exposure, while personal listening devices can reach 100-110 dB, which is unsafe even for short durations. This makes early detection difficult, as the damage progresses silently," she explained.

Doctors stress that prevention is both simple and effective. Reducing exposure to loud environments is key.

"Minimising exposure is essential. Use earplugs in high-noise areas, avoid zones with excessive honking, and limit time spent in heavy traffic," Dr Hegde advised.

Dr Tandon added that safe listening practices are crucial. "Follow the 60/60 rule — listen at less than 60% volume for no more than 60 minutes at a time. Use ear protection in noisy workplaces, treat ear infections early, and manage conditions like diabetes and hypertension. Regular hearing check-ups can help detect problems early," he said.

File picture

EXPERTS' TAKE ON AUDITORY PROBLEMS

- Traffic noise in Bengaluru routinely hits 70–100 dB, significantly exceeding the 70 dB safety limit
- Hearing damage often develops slowly and goes unnoticed until it reaches critical stage. Early warning signs include tinnitus and difficulty understanding speech in crowded environments
- Chronic noise exposure being linked to non-auditory issues such as anxiety, sleep disturbances, cardiovascular disease and reduced concentration
- Commuters often increase earphone volumes to drown out traffic noise, sometimes reaching dangerous levels of 100–110 dB. This habit is causing permanent damage to inner ear hair cells
- Hearing loss, once considered an age-related issue, is now appearing at alarming rates among children and young adults

> Bengaluru's traffic noise routinely exceeds safe limits, with monitoring data showing levels often crossing 60-70 dB across residential and commercial zones... When the level exceeds 70 dB, there is a possibility of hearing impairment
>
> **Dr Jyotirmay S Hegde** | ASTER WHITEFIELD HOSPITAL

This summer, police to rein in minors who fancy riding

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Bengaluru: Photographs of a pre-teen on a scooter with five kids riding pillion and the video of another minor riding a two-wheeler on a busy road went viral in Bengaluru Monday, prompting police to warn of strict action if parents allow their children access to vehicles, especially during school summer holidays.

In the video reportedly shot in Cholarapalya near Magadi Road, a boy, whose legs didn't even touch the road when seated, is seen riding the scooter (KA04 JU 7038) on a narrow road that has many pedestrians and oncoming vehicles.

The post by Karnataka Portfolio on X stated: "He (the boy) isn't even able to properly control the vehicle from the seat; instead he stands on the footboard while riding, and when he stops, he jumps onto the road and tries to hold on to the vehicle. This is not just unsafe, it is a serious accident waiting to happen. What is more alarming is the role of parents; how can they allow a child of such a young age to operate a vehicle on a public road?"

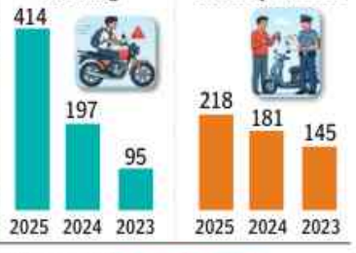
Netizens joined the discussion on the post and demanded stern action against the scooter owner and seizure of the vehicle.

In another case, a motorist posted the photograph of a boy, aged 10-12 years, riding a scooter (KA05 JZ 9065) with five other kids riding pillion. The photos were taken in front of a gas station on Padarayanapura Main Road near Goripalya. None of the kids were wearing helmets.

In both cases, Magadi Road traffic police registered FIRs and are trying to find the vehicle owners. Police sources said they suspect summer holidays to be the reason why minors are taking out scooters for a ride.

Police have warned parents of strict action if they give children access to vehicles. Joint commissioner of police (traffic) Karthik Reddy told **TOI**, "When a minor is caught driving, we book a case against the parents/guardians and vehicle owner. We request the public to ensure that children do not drive vehicles."

ALARMING RISE IN OFFENCES



Courts, fines and punishments

Courts will penalise parents or guardians or vehicle owners up to ₹25,000. Besides, there are instances where parents or guardians or vehicle owners have been sent to jail for one day

HC declines to interfere in interim custody issue

▸ Continued from page 1

In July 2024, the family court had awarded Rs 40,000 as interim maintenance, Rs 60,000 towards monthly educational expenses, and Rs 25,000 for litigation costs.

On the custody issue, the high court declined to interfere with the family court's refusal to grant interim custody to the father, observing that such decisions at an interlocutory stage are based on a prima facie assessment and warrant a cautious approach.

The couple got married in Sept 2006 at Chennai and relocated to the US.

Trouble started in 2022, when the wife accused her husband of infidelity. In 2023, the husband moved the family court, seeking custody of his minor children and the same was rejected.

He then moved Karnataka high court, claiming that the family court had not only rejected his petition, but also granted him only limited rights to visit his children.

On the other hand, the wife filed two petitions, one seeking enhanced maintenance and the other for increasing the amount awarded for the educational expenses of the children.

Company caught growing ganja on staircase, sealed

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: Excise department officials seized several cannabis plants and sealed the premises of a transport company during a surprise raid Monday in Nelamangala on the outskirts of the city.

The operation was carried out at a logistics firm in Dobbespet Industrial Area, where officials discovered several cannabis (ganja) plants being grown in decorative pots along the staircase leading to the company's office.

Those behind the cultivation are yet to be identified and no arrests have been made so far. The raid was led by excise inspector Sumalatha, who confirmed the plants were seized and premises sealed.

Woman dies in 'washing machine shock'

Bengaluru: A 31-year-old homemaker died due to electric shock, suspected to have been caused from a washing machine.

The tragedy happened near Nelamangala, on the city outskirts, a day after C Sujatha, the victim, celebrated her 11th wedding anniversary. Police said Sujatha tried to switch on the machine around 8am when she allegedly suffered electric shock and collapsed. Family members rushed her to a nearby hospital, where doctors declared her dead.

However, her relatives raised concerns over how she died. Sujatha's brother alleged the incident may not have been accidental and called for a detailed investigation. Sujatha was married to Chethan for 11 years and they have a nine-year-old son. Family sources said the couple had a minor dispute a few days ago, following which she went to her parental home and later came back.

Chethan's family denied any allegations of harassment, maintaining they did not subject her to any distress. The couple celebrated their wedding anniversary Sunday and performed a pooja at their residence. TNN

Biker crashes into road divider, dies

Bengaluru: An early-morning ride turned fatal for a 28-year-old private firm employee after his bike crashed into a divider near Dr Ambedkar Institute of Technology on Old Outer Ring Road in Nagarabhavi.

The deceased is Harish, a resident of RPC Layout in Vijayanagar. TNN

Spending ₹500 a week on meds even today: Cooker blast victim

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

45 witnesses examined, says public prosecutor

▸ Continued from page 1

Still battling the physical and financial scars of the 2022 Mangaluru pressure cooker blast, autorickshaw driver **Purushotham Poojary Ujjodi** voiced disappointment over the 10-year sentence awarded to prime accused Mohammed Shariq, saying he had hoped for life imprisonment.

Purushotham, who sustained severe burns in the low-intensity blast inside his moving autorickshaw on Nov 19 last year, said the punishment does not match the trauma he endured. Reacting to the verdict of the special NIA court, which sentenced Shariq to 10 years of rigorous imprisonment, he said, "It has already been four years since the incident. Once Shariq is out, what guarantee is there that he will not get involved in anti-national activities again?"

Recalling his ordeal, Purushotham said he spent nearly 100 days in hospital and remained bedridden for over a year. "Even today, I spend around Rs 1,000 every 15 days on medicines," he said, adding that the attack had upended his life. Purushotham also expressed concern over the lack of sustained financial support.

Meanwhile, VHP welcomed the verdict but said the punishment was too lenient, urging NIA to seek a harsher sentence.

Special public prosecutor P Prasanna Kumar told **TOI** that besides collecting circumstantial and scientific evidence against Shariq, they examined 45 witnesses. Shariq was aware "a tight case" had been built against him. Realising he had no chance, Shariq pleaded guilty as charged, he said.

NIA established Shariq was radicalised and intended to carry out a large-scale attack to disrupt communal harmony in the coastal region. Investigators revealed Shariq procured explosive materials online and assembled IED himself. The court convicted him under Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act and IPC.

Man attacks barking dog

Bengaluru: Police are looking for a tender coconut seller who allegedly attacked a barking street dog with his sickle. Police said the incident took place at Muniyappa Layout, KR Pura II Stage on April 25. A video showed the man walking into the compound of a house with the sickle. When the house owner questioned him, he claimed the dog barked at him for no reason. He then allegedly hit the animal. TNN

8 edu guarantees: Govt promises Eng medium option in schools

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: In its efforts to improve admission to its schools, Karnataka govt has now promised eight education guarantees.

A post shared by chief minister Siddaramaiah and the department of school education Monday lists out the promises that will be rolled out in the next three years.

They includes one teacher per class up to class 5 and subject-wise teachers from class 6, optional English medium in all schools with teachers receiving training.

It promises free transport for Karnataka Public School students. Computer teachers will be appointed in all KPSs in the next three years. There will also be dedicated teachers for arts, music and physical education.

In another guarantee, the govt said it will recruit separate staff for non-teaching tasks, leaving teachers only for teaching.

The learning quality will be monitored, with a lesson-based assessment system tracking each child's progress and a mandatory parent-teacher meeting every two months. Skill education from grade 6 and special coaching for competitive exams are also among the govt's eight guarantees.

The target for the department is to get five million children in govt schools in the next five years, promising "the best govt school system in the country".

"Our five-year vision is clear: to build the best govt school system in the country. I invite parents and students to be part of this transformative journey," said the post.

CET centre staff intentionally made students remove janivara: Committee

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: A committee set up to probe the case of students appearing for the Common Entrance Test (CET) having to remove their janivara (sacred thread) said it seemed the act by the college staff was intentional.

The panel, constituted by Bengaluru Urban deputy commissioner Jagadeesha G, recommended that Krupanidhi PU College on Sarajapur Main Road no longer be used as an exam centre.

"We constituted a committee headed by senior officers, and during the inquiry, prima facie it was found that the act by the college staff was intentional. The staff was given training on the dress code. KEA had also appointed a separate dress code officer. Despite that, the college staff forced the students to remove their sacred thread. There were over 700 other centres. Such an incident was not reported from anywhere else," he said Monday.

It verified CCTV footage, discussed with the college principal and spoke to students, parents and examination observers, the DC said. The report has recommended that Karnataka Examinations Authority (KEA) not consider the college as a centre for any of the exams in future.

The panel's report recommended that KEA not consider Krupanidhi PU College as a centre for future exams

The committee also recommended stringent action against the staff who were involved in the incident. "The college has already suspended the staff, an FIR has been filed, and a police investigation is going on. Along with that, we are recommending stringent action against staff," he added.

On Thursday, the first day of CET, at least three students at Krupanidhi PU College were allegedly stopped while frisking and asked to remove the sacred thread. The students wrote the paper after removing it.

As their parents filed police complaints, three people — faculty member Sudeheer D, second division clerk A Sarita and attender Girija of Krupanidhi College — were arrested under Sections 299 (deliberate and malicious acts intended to outrage the religious feelings of any class by insulting its religion or beliefs) and 302 (uttering words or gestures with the deliberate intent to wound the religious feelings of any person).

The exam conducted by KEA for admission to engineering and various other professional courses was taken by 3.3 lakh students at 745 centres in the state.

UP TO DATE | WHAT'S #TRENDING AND WHY

Worker dies during steps setup for Wedding concert in the Air Amidst

World's largest Vaastu reconference in London

FINOLEX PIPES PLUS

'Seeing my mother dive was a dream come true'

'Scuba diving is a game changer'

At long as we are breathing and able to walk, we should go on the opportunity to try something new and adrenaline-

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price starting at ₹5.76 lakh*

Award as Duster

80.43 cm Roaring headrooms

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May 9 Yediyurappa show to give son more political heft

ManuAiyappa.Kanathanda
@timesofindia.com

Bengaluru: The 'BSY Abhimanotsava' on May 9 in Chitradurga, to mark former chief minister BS Yediyurappa's 50 years in public life, will double as a political exercise to consolidate state president BY Vijayendra's position within a divided party unit.

Though officially billed as a commemorative programme, party functionaries say the scale and timing reflect a broader organisational objective — to reinforce Vijayendra's authority ahead of a string of electoral battles.

TOI

BIG BOOTS TO FILL: File picture of BY Vijayendra with his father and former chief minister BS Yediyurappa in Bengaluru

BSY ABHIMANOTSAVA

Since taking charge as state president 30 months ago, Vijayendra has faced resistance from several senior functionaries, with multiple power centres continuing to influence party affairs after Yediyurappa's retirement from electoral politics. Vijayendra has been accused of not living up to expectations in reviving state BJP's fortunes, especially in comparison to his father, Yediyurappa, 83.

Against this backdrop, the Abhimanotsava is being seen as an attempt by Vijayendra to demonstrate organisational control and mobilise support across regions.

Yediyurappa's influence, especially among Lingayat voters who have traditionally backed BJP, remains central to this strategy. By foregrounding his father's legacy, Vijayendra is seeking to bridge internal divisions and rally cadres around a widely accepted leadership figure.

The invitation extended to Union home minister Amit Shah is also significant. His presence is expected to lend national visibility and signal Vijayendra's acceptability to party central brass. Sources say endorsement from the top often plays a decisive role in settling internal equations within state units.

Mobilisation efforts are underway, with units tasked to ensure large participation. Former deputy CM Govind Karjol said the event is expected to draw "lakhs". The turnout will be seen as a measure of Vijayendra's organisational grip. A strong show could help counter criticism and reinforce his standing within the party.

The strategy draws parallels with chief minister Siddaramaiah's Siddaramotsava in Davanagere in 2022, which preceded Congress's victory in the 2023 assembly polls. While BJP functionaries have not formally framed the Abhimanotsava in electoral terms, the attempt at large-scale mobilisation is evident.

Seniors including opposition leader R Ashoka, Jagadish Shettar and Karjol have backed Vijayendra, but the response from other functionaries remains to be seen.

Analysts note that reliance on legacy politics presents both strength and limitation. "Not just the turnout but also participation of senior functionaries is likely to be seen as indicators of Vijayendra's ability to stabilise the party unit," said Vishwas Shetty, political commentator.

With assembly polls in 2028, some observers say the exercise may be too early. But, the event is expected to test Vijayendra's ability to manage factions, coordinate large mobilisation and project a unified party image. If Shah participates, his presence is likely to put pressure on seniors who have so far kept their distance.

Lad gives Trump the finger

Ballari: Minister of labour **Santosh Lad** stirred controversy after he made an obscene gesture on camera at US President Donald Trump over remarks describing India as a "hellhole".

During a public interaction in Sandur, Ballari, Lad called Trump's comment an "insult to the country and Prime Minister Narendra Modi". With cameras rolling, he held up his middle finger and said, "Mr Trump, you are a Mad Max."

He went on to say: "I know you are the President of America, but that does not mean you can say whatever you want about my country. I strongly condemn this. I can show a middle finger also."

In a Truth Social post, Trump had criticised birthright citizenship in the US and used offensive language for countries including India and China. India called the remarks "uninformed and in poor taste", while saying they "do not reflect bilateral ties". The US embassy later cited Trump's earlier positive remarks on India to ease tensions. TNN

Green energy corridor hits snags, state misses deadline

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Bengaluru: Karnataka's push to strengthen its renewable energy evacuation network has hit delays, with the govt missing the March 31 deadline to complete phase II of the Green Energy Corridor project. It has now sought an extension to July 31 next year.

Sanctioned by the Centre to support states with high renewable energy generation, the project aims to build dedicated transmission infrastructure linking clean energy sources such as wind and solar to the national grid. Karnataka, among the leading renewable energy producers, was selected for the initiative.

However, land acquisition hurdles, especially in securing right of way for transmission lines and substations, have slowed execution. Karnataka Power Transmission Corporation Ltd, the executing agency, has completed only about 50% of the work so far.

The phase II project, launched in 2022, involves constructing 938 circuit km of transmission lines and substations with a capacity of 1,225MVA to evacuate around 2,640Mw of renewable energy.

FROM SOURCE TO GRID

Category	Details
Renewable energy capacity	**25,837 MW**
Phase I	**618 ckm** transmission lines **2,702 MVA** substations
Phase II	**938 ckm** transmission lines **1,225 MVA** substations
Total project cost **(Phase I & II)**	₹**2,026** crore
Centre's share	₹**668.5** crore

Getty Images

In a letter dated April 16 to the ministry of new and renewable energy secretary, additional chief secretary (energy) Gaurav Gupta cited multiple hurdles and sought more time. He said despite diligent efforts, "unforeseeable challenges" have impeded progress of the proposed projects.

Besides the bottleneck of right of way acquisition, he pointed to delays in specific components, including the loop in loop out of the second circuit of the existing 220 kV Mahalingapura-Kudachi DC line at the 220kV Athani substation, which was awarded only in Jan 2026 after a fresh survey due to anticipated right of way issues.

Data shared by the ministry shows partial progress on the ground. As of March 31, some 498 circuit km of transmission lines have been completed and substations of 600MVA capacity have been commissioned.

"KPTCL has already awarded all 10 packages," the ministry said. "The estimated cost for the Karnataka project is Rs 1,036 crore and the central grant at 33% of the project cost is about Rs 342 crore of which Rs 108 crore have been disbursed."

The Green Energy Corridor programme envisages an overall investment of Rs 11,369 crore. States are expected to fund 67% of the costs through internal resources or borrowings.

PM replies to invite, blesses couple

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: A Raichur resident has drawn attention after he received a personalised reply to his wedding invitation he sent to Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Rajesh Nayak of Kanihala had mailed the invitation ahead of his April 13 wedding with Savitha. Days later, he received an official letter from the Prime Minister's Office.

"I thank you heartily for inviting me to your wedding. As you enter this auspicious phase of life, may you and Savitha be blessed with a wonderful life ahead," the letter read. It wished the couple harmony and companionship, urging them to "stand by each other at all times" and pursue their aspirations together. The message concluded with best wishes for a long, happy, and beautiful life together.

Nayak shared a video of the letter Monday, calling it an unexpected moment. "I had sent the invitation with hope, but without expectation. Receiving a reply from the Prime Minister is remarkable," he said. He said the gesture was meaningful for his family and village. "It shows he acknowledged a letter from an ordinary citizen. It is a matter of pride for all of us," Nayak said.

Legislator says DKS may get greater authority on his birthday on May 15

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: Amid continuing speculation over a possible change of chief minister, higher education minister MC Sudhakar urged the Congress high command to take a decision and end uncertainty.

"Discussions regarding a change have been going on for many months," Sudhakar said. "But a final decision could not be taken earlier due to the continuous cycle of elections."

With the election process nearing completion, he indicated the matter could now be pursued. "Perhaps the DK brothers approached the high command in this regard," he said, referring to deputy CM DK Shivakumar's two-day visit to Delhi.

Ranganath, Kunigal MLA, said he expects the high command to confer greater authority on Shivakumar on his birthday on May 15. Ranganath, a close relative of Shivakumar, said the deputy CM has ensured several development works and the high command should recognise his efforts. "We will do our work and leave the results to God," he added.

TOI

PEACE TO ALL: Siddaramaiah during the inauguration of the World Buddhist Conference on Monday

Meanwhile, health minister Dinesh Gundu Rao, responding to Shivakumar's remark that "what has to happen, will happen", said it should not be "misread". He insisted that there is complete cohesion within the party.

Asked about meetings between Shivakumar and his brother, former MP DK Suresh, with central brass in New Delhi, home minister G Parameshwara said such developments are part of "regular political activity". On his own meeting with chief minister Siddaramaiah, he said it was also part of routine engagements.

Responding to Shivakumar's remark that details of discussions would be out in due course, Parameshwara said it was a "political statement" and did not require "interpretation". "They met, had a meal and returned," he said.

On public works (PWD) minister Satish Jarkiholi's comment about challenges from Ahinda communities in implementing govt promises, Parameshwara said it was a personal view.

SHORT TAKES

BJP wants Umar Khalid event cancelled

Karnataka BJP urged Bengaluru police commissioner Seemant Kumar Singh to cancel a programme in support of activist Umar Khalid. A delegation led by PC Mohan, Bengaluru Central MP, submitted a memorandum opposing the event scheduled for Tuesday, where editors of 'Umar Khalid and His World' are set to read excerpts and hold a discussion. Khalid remains in custody over alleged links to a conspiracy behind the 2020 Delhi riots. BJP warned of potential law and order issues. The 2020 riots left 53 dead and over 700 injured.

5% housing quota for persons with disablities

The govt issued a notification last week on amendments to Karnataka Urban Development Authorities (Site Allotment) Rules, providing 5% reservation for persons with benchmark disabilities (PwBDs) in housing allotments. Sources say the move followed a high court order, which directed the state to ensure effective implementation of section 37 of Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act through better coordination among departments and local authorities. Section 37 mandates 5% reservation for persons with benchmark disabilities in allotment of agricultural land and housing, poverty alleviation schemes, and allotment of land at concessional rates, with priority given to women with benchmark

Internal quota: Nomadic tribes to approach HC

An alliance of untouchable nomadic communities plans to approach the high court against the new internal reservation matrix for Scheduled Castes announced by the govt last week. The group is considering filing an additional petition in existing cases being heard by the court. Nearly 50 of the 63 nomadic tribes and 10 micro-SC communities say the matrix is "unscientific". They are demanding 1% reservation under Category A and want 49 of them shifted out of Category C and given primacy in reservation.

Statistics minister stable but still unresponsive, says Parameshwara

Home minister G Parameshwara said planning and statistics minister D Sudhakar remains unresponsive, though his vital parameters are stable. After visiting Sudhakar, Parameshwara said, "It will take time for his brain to regain normalcy. Doctors are hopeful, after that it is God's will. We hope he returns to good health." Responding to allegations by Union minister HD Kumaraswamy allegations that Sudhakar's thumb impression was being used on documents, deputy CM DK Shivakumar said, "Kumaraswamy must have some experience in these matters. Only he can say whose fingerprints (were used) and why."

DOORS, WINDOWS & FAÇADES SOLUTIONS

READER ENGAGEMENT INITIATIVE

Smarter building envelopes for a growing city

With construction activities accelerating across regions, the fenestration and façade segment is advancing with better materials and a sharper focus on quality, performance, and sustainability

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India's real estate and infrastructure sector continues to expand at a steady pace, with construction activity gaining momentum across regions. As this growth gathers pace, there is a clear and increasing emphasis on quality, performance, and sustainability in building design. In step with this shift, the fenestration and façade segment is steadily moving towards better materials, smarter systems, and more responsible construction practices.

Architects, developers, fabricators, consultants, and contractors are actively engaging with advancements in doors, windows, glass, façades, and aluminium extrusion systems, reflecting the segment's growing focus on innovation and performance. This evolution is evident in the wide range of practical solutions now available—supporting more refined design, efficient execution, and the long-term performance of building envelopes. The offerings in the segment span uPVC and aluminium frameworks, façades, cladding, railings, and hardware, as well as enabling software, machinery, and glass processing technologies.

Closing the gap between design and execution, the industry is increasingly focused on how systems come together on-site rather than on individual products alone. As buildings become more complex and performance-driven, precision in fabrication, ease of installation, and lifecycle performance have become central considerations. In this context, innovation extends beyond materials to processes—bringing together design intent, engineering accuracy, and on-ground execution.

To connect the dots between concept and application, there is a growing emphasis on how materials and systems perform in real-world conditions. This helps stakeholders assess their suitability more effectively, offering a clearer perspective on design and implementation.

Against this backdrop, interest in advanced materials and fenestration systems remains strong across the sector, with stakeholders looking for solutions that improve efficiency, durability, and sustainability.

When artistes in the West spoke out against war

The Vietnam War and the rise of the counterculture movement

Iraq War: A splintered dissent

Cinema shifts focus to war's human consequences

Lennon, Hendrix and the Vietnam protest

Voices outside America

The modern crisis: Social media and documentaries

Park Chan-wook's western thriller draws an A-list ensemble

Haven't reconnected with Jon Cryer since Two and a Half Men fallout: Charlie Sheen

'You go for the experience of live music, not a karaoke'

'THE FUTURE OF LIVE MUSIC IS HYBRID'

TIMES NATION

* THE TIMES OF INDIA, BENGALURU | TUESDAY, APRIL 28, 2026

TELUGU ACTOR ALLU ARJUN GETS DELHI HC RELIEF, COURT BARS MISUSE OF HIS NAME, IMAGE, VOICE

MURMU ARRIVES IN SHIMLA FOR 5-DAY VISIT DURING WHICH SHE IS SCHEDULED TO VISIT ATAL TUNNEL

HACK OF THE DAY SILENCE UNKNOWN WHATSAPP CALLS WITHOUT BLOCKING

WHAT IT SOLVES: Cuts down random scam, spam, and nuisance calls on WhatsApp without blocking legitimate people forever

WHAT TO DO: Turn on Silence Unknown Callers so unknown numbers stop breaking your concentration and sleep

STEPS:

1. **Open** WhatsApp Settings
2. **Go to** Privacy and then Calls
3. **Turn on** Silence unknown callers
4. **Review** missed unknown calls later from the Calls tab if needed
5. **Keep** this on if you regularly get spam or scam attempts

NOTE: This is a strong middle path. You do not lose the record of the call, but your phone stops getting hijacked by it

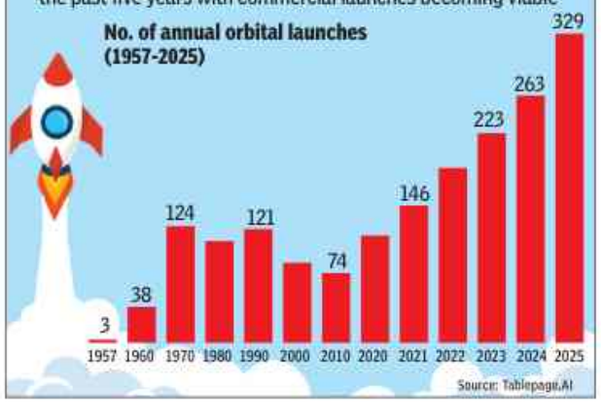
SCAN FOR MORE

Hacks are based on verified public sources. Readers are advised to follow official websites & updated rules

STATISTICS A slice of life in numbers

One space launch a day!

A total of 329 orbital launches — both by countries and private players — took place in 2025, nearly one a day. Dominated by state-run agencies after Sputnik's launch in 1957, missions have surged in the past five years with commercial launches becoming viable



Rajya Sabha chairman accepts merger of 7 AAP MPs with BJP

Saffron Party's Strength Now 113 In 245-Member House, AAP's Down To 3

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AAP MP Sanjay Singh, who had written to Radhakrishnan (R) seeking disqualification of the MPs, on Monday asked on what basis AAP's party position had been altered in RS records

New Delhi: Rajya Sabha chairman C P Radhakrishnan has officially accepted the merger of seven AAP MPs with BJP — taking the governing party's strength in the 245-member upper House to 113.

With Raghav Chadha, Sandeep Pathak, Ashok Mittal, Harbhanjan Singh, Swati Maliwal, Vikramjit Sahney and Rajinder Gupta defecting, AAP's strength in RS now stands at three. The RS website showed the MPs as part of BJP.

On Monday, parliamentary affairs minister Kiren Rijiju said the chairman has accepted merger of the seven AAP MPs with BJP. "Welcome to nation-building NDA under PM Modi's visionary leadership and goodbye to 'tukde-tukde' INDI alliance," he said.

However, AAP MP Sanjay Singh — who had written to Radhakrishnan Sunday seeking disqualification of the MPs under Constitution's Tenth Schedule — in another letter Monday sought clarification from the RS secretary general on what basis the party position (number of MPs) of AAP been altered in RS records.

If this is not clarified, AAP will move court on this "unilateral decision", Singh said. This was done "without any prior intimation to or concurrence of AAP or its floor leader in the House", he said.

In his Monday letter, Singh said any arbitrary alteration in party position, without following due procedure would have "serious consequences" on rights of the party and its members. He sought an inquiry.

Meanwhile, a section of legal experts highlighted the 10th Tenth Schedule's inability to stop political defections when they acquire scale of "merger". The "merger" exception under the schedule's para 4 stipulates in sub-paragraph 2 that such a merger is valid if at least two-third of the legislature party agrees to it.

On his decision to leave AAP, Chadha on Monday in a video message alleged work environment in AAP had turned "toxic". It's trapped in hands of some corrupt and compromised people, who work for personal gains, he claimed.

Congress' Jairam Ramesh said the only surprise in chairman's decision is that it "took so long". "Till recently, BJP had questions on their integrity and claimed to have evidence, but all that is now forgotten. ED was raising some until recently, but one can bet that those will stop now," he said. "Lotus has become Lootus".

Ahead of Shah's visit, Ladakh gets 5 more dists

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iStock

SCENIC SHIFT: Drass River

Srinagar: Ladakh's number of districts rose from two to seven after five more were added — Nubra, Sham, Changthang, Zanskar and Drass — in a notification issued on Monday by LG Vinai Kumar Saxena, days before Union home minister Amit Shah is due to visit.

Calling it a "historic day", Saxena said the move fulfils a long-pending demand & would "strengthen grassroots governance" and improve service delivery in remote areas. Ladakh had 2 districts — Leh and Kargil — each governed by autonomous hill councils set up in 1995 and 2003, respectively.

It's still uncertain whether new districts will fall under existing Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council or get separate councils. Saxena said the decision, approved by home ministry in Aug 2024, aligns with PM Modi's vision of a "developed and prosperous Ladakh", adding it would open avenues for growth, jobs and entrepreneurship.

The home minister is scheduled to reach Leh on April 30 for a two-day visit.

Leh's BJP neta Tashi Gyalson called the decision "historic" and credited party workers. Kargil hill council chairman M Jaffer Akhoon termed it a "welcome development" but said demands for separate districts of Sankoo and Shakar-Chiktan — among the most populated subdivisions — weren't met.

Court takes note of Tihar undertrials' 'custodial assault'

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New Delhi: An incident of custodial violence in Tihar jail is under judicial scrutiny after CCTV footage played before a Delhi court showed some jail officials "pulling a group of undertrial prisoners out of their cell and beating them up with dandas" on March 24. The footage, produced in court by jail superintendent, prompted additional sessions judge Sonu Agnihotri to question the legality of the force used.

He observed that it "does not appear to be in accordance with the law".

While the superintendent admitted that "excess force has been used on undertrials", he claimed it was in retaliation to a stone/brick thrown by an inmate from the cell. The court took note of this misconduct by unidentified inmate, but it said the act had taken place "more than about 30 minutes" before the prisoners were dragged out and thrashed, thus undermining officials' claim that force was used for self-defence.

"Undertrial prisoners are in custody of the court... Using excessive force, which is not justified for any misconduct on part of them, should be dealt with in accordance with the law," the judge said. The CCTV footage, submitted in a pen drive, was ordered to be sealed and retained on record to prevent misuse. A copy of the order has been sent to DG (prisons) with directions to conduct a probe, fix responsibility on officials and submit a report to the court before the next date of hearing on May 13.

Noida airport set for June launch

New Delhi: Days after it replaced its expat CEO with Nitu Samra, an Indian, to overcome a regulatory hurdle, Noida International Airport Monday received its final clearance, allowing preparations to begin for commercial launch, **reports Saurabh Sinha.**

IndiGo, Air India Express and Akasa are expected to start selling domestic tickets soon. The first flight is likely to take off in the first week of June.

Kejriwal 'recuses' from excise case hearings before judge Sharma

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New Delhi: AAP chief **Arvind Kejriwal** has decided to boycott excise policy case hearings before Delhi high court judge Swarana Kanta Sharma. In a 4-page letter to the judge, the former Delhi CM said he would not participate in the proceedings, neither in person nor through his lawyer.

His reason is that he has come to the "clear conclusion that the proceedings being conducted in her court do not satisfy the fundamental principle that justice must not only be done but must also be seen to be done". His decision came days after the judge rejected the plea by Kejriwal and others seeking her recusal from hearing the case.

A special court acquitted the former CM, former deputy CM Manish Sisodia and others in excise policy case on Feb 27. In a video posted on X, Kejriwal said Justice Sharma has "repeatedly attended events of Akhil Bharatiya Adhivakta Parishad", an RSS-linked outfit, & "govt of RSS ideology imprisoned me through false allegations".

He added, "In court, CBI of central govt stands against me, and both children of Justice Sharma work for central govt. On the other side in court stands Solicitor General Tushar Mehta who assigns cases to both her children." "There are around 700 lawyers on Centre's panel, but her son is among those who received the highest number of cases," Kejriwal claimed.

He said in future he would have no hesitation in appearing before her in any of his cases, "provided BJP, Centre or Tushar Mehta are not opposing me".

Dutt apologises for 'Sarke Chunar' 'vulgar' lyrics

New Delhi: Actor **Sanjay Dutt** on Monday appeared before National Commission for Women (NCW) in connection with the controversy over the song 'Sarke Chunar Teri Sarke' and submitted a written apology. NCW raised concerns over alleged vulgarity & indecent representation of women in the song from movie "KD: The Devil" and questioned issues of intent, awareness and accountability.

As a corrective measure, Dutt committed to sponsoring education of 50 tribal girls as part of efforts towards social welfare and women's empowerment, NCW said. He also assured his future artist agreements would include mandatory legal due diligence provisions to ensure dignified and appropriate representation of women and children. PTI

Guj's Bustard chick goes missing amid fears of predator sneak-in

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Ahmedabad: The bustard may not have been so lucky after all. A 50-strong contingent of guards deployed for round-the-clock surveillance, sealed roads and watchtowers proved inadequate to protect Gujarat's first Great Indian Bustard chick born in the wild in almost a decade.

Forest officials said Monday the chick possibly got separated from its GPS-tagged mother at 26 days and hasn't been sighted since April 18, raising fears a predator, likely a jackal or wild dog, killed it.

The chick (circled in red) had been under round-the-clock surveillance

State forest and environment minister Arjun Modhwadia said he was unaware of the chick going missing.

Assigned security rivalling India's Z+ protocol for VVIPs, the chick's hatching on March 24 in Kutch had been a celebratory moment for conservationists fighting to save one of the most critically endangered bird species.

Its disappearance is the latest in a string of setbacks in Gujarat. In Dec 2018, the state's only surviving male GIB went missing and was never found.

Sources said gaps in the fence may have allowed predators to enter. As hopes of finding the chick fade, conservationists warn the species could face extinction without better planning, and stronger habitat protection.

5 workers dead, 12 hurt as cranes collapse in Hyd

Hyderabad: At least five migrant workers were killed and 12 others injured after cranes collapsed on them at a steel fabrication unit in Hyderabad's outskirts on Monday afternoon, **reports Ajay Tomar.**

Two of the injured are in ICU, police said. The workers are from Jharkhand, Odisha, Bihar and UP. Police have lodged a death by negligence case against the unit owner.

Police said the workers were taking shelter under a shed following a sudden downpour when the cranes came crashing down. It appears that owing to structural failure and instability, caused by adverse weather, the cranes collapsed, they said.

Varanasi bizman lynched after his car hits woman

Varanasi: A businessman (36) was lynched after his car hit a woman washing utensils along the road in Phulpur area of Varanasi. Police said Manish Singh was returning home from his factory around 10.30pm Sunday when he lost control of the car and hit and injured the woman.

TWO ARRESTED

Manish stepped out of his car to check on her. Soon, villagers and the woman's family members surrounded him and started assaulting him with sticks and bricks. He suffered critical injuries and was left to die, said police. On getting information, Manish's family members rushed to the spot and took him to BHU trauma centre where he was declared dead.

Police filed an FIR against eight identified and seven unidentified people. Two accused were arrested Monday, while 11 people were detained for questioning. His family held a protest Monday, refusing to perform his last rites until all accused were arrested. They conducted the funeral after assurance from police.

Police and PAC have been deployed in Ghamhapur village and police also conducted a foot march to maintain law and order. Senior police officers are camping in the village. Manish is survived by his wife and three children. TNN

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SC says rights of those who have suffered take priority

▶ Continued from page 1

When senior advocate Narender Hooda argued about long incarceration and rights of accused, the CJI-led bench said for long jurisprudence has favoured rights of the accused. "That is old-fashioned. The new jurisprudence is for protection of rights of those who have suffered because of crimes," the SC said.

The bench said ensuring homebuyers' interest is of paramount importance.

Instead of seeking response from Enforcement Directorate on Chhokar's bail plea, SC asked him to present a comprehensive plan to repay homebuyers "whom you have ex-facie duped".

The Chhokar family, which owns several real estate firms, undertook the project of building 1,500 flats on a 10-acre plot at Gurgaon's Sector 68 in 2017. Their firm collected around Rs 363 crore from homebuyers and allegedly misappropriated or misutilised the funds, leading to registration of a case by the ED under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act.

Finding Chhokar's active involvement misappropriating funds, the HC on April 6 rejected his bail plea, saying, "It is apparent on record that the petitioner is accused of siphoning off hundreds of crores of rupees of homebuyers who booked flats in the affordable group housing project being developed by Sai Aaina Farms Pvt Ltd (SAFPL)."

The HC had also rejected Chhokar's bail plea.

Quitting a live-in relationship is not a criminal offence: SC

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SC said such relationships had no legal binding and people should be careful about their vagaries

New Delhi: While sympathising with women whose live-in partners have walked out of the relationship, Supreme Court on Monday said courts could not do much as ending a consensual relationship was not an offence.

Hearing the plea of a woman who was in a live-in relationship for 15 years, but whose partner married someone else despite a child being born to them, a bench of Justices B V Nagarathna and Ujjal Bhuyan said it could not allow her plea for a criminal case of sexual harassment and exploitation against him, as it was a consensual relationship.

"There was a consensual relationship and a child was born. Once he walks out, it is not a criminal offence. Where is the question of an offence when the relationship was consensual?" the bench said.

The court said there was no legal binding in such a relationship and that people should be careful about the vagaries of live-in relationships.

"Why did she go and live with him before marriage? They could have married. Now she is saying sexual assault," the bench told her lawyer. The woman's counsel said she was an 18-year-old widow when she came in contact with the man, and that she was forced into a physical relationship on the false promise of marriage. She told the bench that the man had married four times.

Refusing to go into his alleged misdeeds, the bench said, "We can only sympathise with your client; she got fooled or whatever. She went with him, had a child, and lived with him for 15 years."

The bench said she could seek maintenance from the man for her eight-year-old child, as he was born out of that relationship. As her lawyer urged the court that mediation could be opted for to seek maintenance, the bench issued notice on that limited issue.

Go for mediation, SC tells Sunjay Kapur kin

New Delhi: Supreme Court on Monday suggested that parties in the Rani Kapur-Priya Kapur dispute over the Sona Group family trust explore mediation, and sought a response from late industrialist Sunjay Kapur's wife Priya Kapur and others on a lawsuit filed by his mother seeking directions to declare the family trust "null and void". A bench of Justices J B Pardiwala and Vijay Bishnoi issued notice to Priya Kapur and others on the plea filed by 80-year-old Rani Kapur, alleging that the trust, which was constituted in her name in Oct 2017, was a product of "forged, fabricated and fraudulent" documents. SC asked the parties to opt for mediation in view of the litigant's advanced age. TNN

FAMILY WARS

Son withdraws charge, HC ends Bina Modi case

New Delhi: Delhi HC high court Monday ended criminal proceedings against Godfrey Phillips India CMD Bina Modi, her personal security guard Surendra Prasad, and senior lawyer Lalit Bhasin in connection with the alleged assault on her son Samir during a board meeting in 2024, after Samir withdrew the charges.

Samir, appearing through video conference, informed Justice Saurabh Banerjee that he had withdrawn the complaint against his mother and the two others, who had moved the HC seeking relief following a settlement between them and Samir. The Saket court had, on Feb 10, summoned the three accused to appear on May 7. TNN

SC allows abortion of 28-wk-old fetus, AIIMS seeks order review

Judge Questions Institute Plea, Latter Cites A Previous 'Unfortunate' Case

Amit Anand Choudhary & Dhananjay Mahapatra | TNN

Allowing termination of pregnancy beyond 28 weeks in the case of a 15-year-old girl, SC rejected arguments based on foetal normalcy or the advanced stage of pregnancy, stating these assume that continuation is unobjectionable in the absence of abnormalities and that the passage of time diminishes a woman's autonomy

New Delhi: Declaring women's right to reproductive autonomy a fundamental right, the Supreme Court has ruled that medical termination of an unwanted pregnancy cannot be denied on the grounds of advanced gestation or normalcy of the fetus, saying such refusal would "render the right to bodily autonomy nugatory".

Allowing termination of pregnancy beyond 28 weeks in the case of a 15-year-old girl in Delhi — who was in a consensual relationship with a 17-year-old boy — a bench of Justices B V Nagarathna and Ujjal Bhuyan said the right to make decisions about one's body, particularly in reproductive matters, is an integral facet of personal liberty and privacy under Article 21, and cannot be curtailed by unreasonable restrictions, especially in cases involving minors and unwanted pregnancies.

On Monday, AIIMS, which had been directed to carry out the termination, sought a review of the order citing medical ethics and the rights of the unborn child. It said the procedure would result in a preterm delivery of a potentially deformed baby requiring prolonged Neonatal ICU support.

The top court had observed that compelling a woman to continue with an unwanted pregnancy would breach her constitutional rights. It rejected arguments based on foetal normalcy or the advanced stage of pregnancy, stating these assume that continuation is unobjectionable in the absence of abnormalities and that the passage of time diminishes a woman's autonomy — both of which it firmly rejected.

It further held that making access to termination contingent on foetal anomaly subordinates a woman's rights to conditions beyond her control, which is constitutionally impermissible. "Rights are not functions of circumstance; they attach to humans because they are free moral agents," the bench said.

In its review plea, AIIMS cited a fresh medical board's opinion that the fetus is viable and warned that preterm delivery could lead to long-term disabilities for the child and pose risks to the minor mother. It suggested that if carried to term, the state could assume responsibility for the child until adoption.

"The unborn viable child of Minor 'N' cannot speak for itself and is entirely dependent on this Hon'ble Court's exercise of its parens patriae jurisdiction to protect its right to life and to be born without preventable disability," it said.

HC: Wife's high edu no bar for maintenance

Nagpur: A woman's high educational qualifications don't disentitle her from the right to maintenance from her husband, Bombay high court's Nagpur bench has ruled, modifying a family court's order, reports **Vaibhav Ganjapure**.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT: CULINARY, CAUTIONARY TALES

No chicken at dinner, man shouts at wife; she kills him

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Hyderabad: A 28-year-old scrap vendor in Kamareddy town died Saturday night after his wife attacked him with a sickle following a tiff over the dinner menu.

Around 9pm on Saturday, Kodandam Shivaji got into an argument with his wife Laxmi for not preparing chicken curry. Their relatives, who live nearby, went to the house and pacified the couple. However, a little while after they left, the argument resumed, and the matters escalated.

As the quarrel intensified, another relative, Nandini, tried to calm them down, but the couple continued arguing.

"Laxmi picked up a sickle kept in the house and attacked Shivaji on the neck. He collapsed after the assault and sustained a head injury due to the fall. He died on the spot due to excessive bleeding," Kamareddy inspector B Narahari said.

According to the complaint lodged by the victim's elder brother Suri, Shivaji had married Laxmi about six years ago, and they have two daughters.

Family members told police that Shivaji and Laxmi used to frequently quarrel over domestic issues. Laxmi has been booked under Section 103 (1) (murder) of the BNS and was arrested on Monday.

Man refuses lunch his wife cooked, gets murdered

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Vadodara: An argument over lunch led to a 30-year-old man being stabbed to death by his wife in Gujarat on Monday afternoon. Police arrested Manju after she killed her husband Amit Devipujak at their house in Kumbharwada locality of Vadodara. She has been booked on murder charges.

Police arrested Manju after she killed her husband Amit Devipujak at their house in Kumbharwada locality of Vadodara in Gujarat

According to police, Manju had cooked food and served it to Amit, a labourer. He allegedly refused to eat the food, which angered Manju. The couple had an argument, and a furious Amit first struck Manju on the head. She then picked up a bladed weapon and stabbed him in the chest and head.

Amit collapsed on the spot and died. The neighbours called the police when they came to know about the murder. Police arrested Manju from the spot, as she didn't attempt to flee. The couple have two children. Police are investigating if the couple had marital discord over other matters, too.

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MINISTRY OF FINANCE

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For more details, please refer to Notification No. 81 to 85/2020-Central Tax & Circular No. 143/13/2020-GST all dated 10.11.2020

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CBC 15502/13/0002/2627

COMING UP

TOI presents a round-up of forthcoming key events and birthdays of notable personalities. Scan the QR code to post your wishes

April 28

Samantha Ruth Prabhu
Actor known for Tamil, Telugu hits, and The Family Man 2
Samanthaprabhu2
samantharuthprabhuoffl

Anupriya Patel
Union minister of state, Apna Dal (Soneylal) prez
AnupriyaSPatel
anupriyapatelofficial

Nikkhil Advani
Filmmaker known for movies like Kal Ho Naa Ho
nikkhiladvani
nikkhiladvani

April 29

Andre Agassi
Former world No. 1 tennis player and eight-time Grand Slam champion
AndreAgassi
agassi

Polls And Roads
- Second phase of Assembly elections in West Bengal
- PM Modi to inaugurate 594-km Ganga Expressway

April 30

Rohit Sharma
Former India skipper who led the 2024 T20 World Cup triumph
ImRo45
rohitsharma45

On Track
Train between Jammu and Srinagar to start

TIMES TRIBUTE

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REMEMBRANCE

SHARING MEMORIES

26th year Remembrance
Smt Shoba Kailashnath Misra,
Prop. Shakti Vegetarian.

Miss you Maa.
You are the most valuable & irreplaceable treasure..
Geetha Misra.

With profound grief we inform of the sad demise of

Mrs. THERESA JOSEPH

Wife of Late B Joseph Sebastian, and Daughter of Late S Arockianathan, Chief Draughtsman, Kolar Gold Mines.

Who left for her heavenly abode on **23rd April 2026.**

Mortal remains will be kept for viewing on **Thursday, 30th April from 9:00 am to 11:00 am,** at No.184, Ground Floor, Oil Mill Road Cross, Near BBMP Park, Lingarajapuram, Bengaluru-560 084.

Funeral Mass will be held at 12 noon in Holy Ghost Church, Davis Road, Bengaluru, followed by burial in Kalpalli Catholic Cemetery, Jeevanahally at 2:00 pm.

Grieving children, grandchildren, siblings and extended family
Contact: Robin - 9449820322; Gilbert - 9742045111

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14001/13/2627

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Prime Minister

Shri Mohan Charan Majhi
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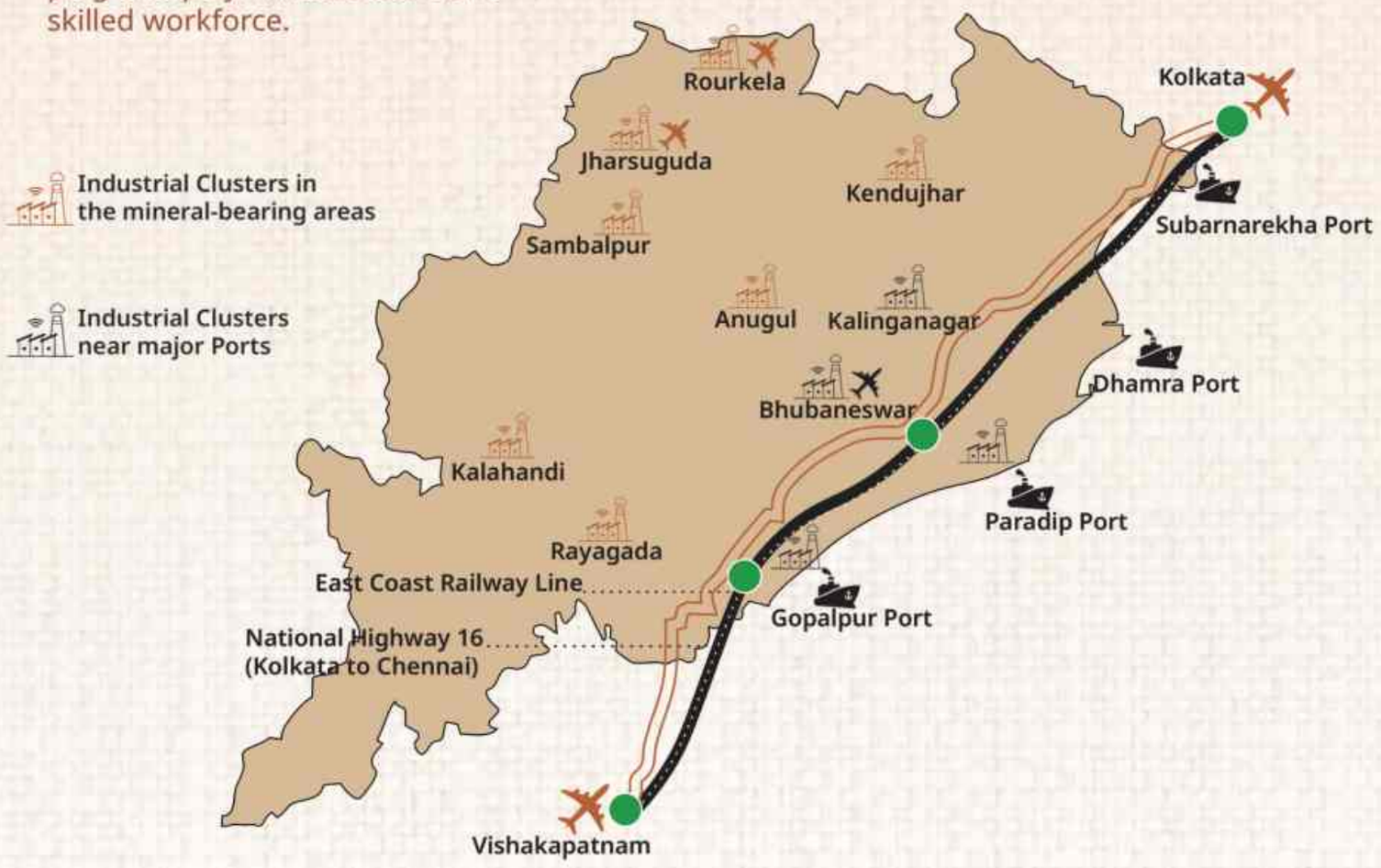
Chemicals & Specialty Chemicals
Chemical Complex at PCPIR: port-led market access specialty chemicals across the value chain.

Metal Downstream & Engineering
Mineral-rich Ecosystem powering Steel, Aluminium, Alloys, Rare Earth and ancillary & downstream growth.

Pharma & Medical Devices
APIs, Formulations & Medical Devices – enabled by skilled talent and robust infrastructure



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Mundhra
05 May 2026 | Mundhra Port

Vadodara
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OIPR-14001/14005/2/26-27/0003

'Undisclosed ₹32cr': Tax relief for Ajit heir Sunetra

'I-T Officer Failed To Establish Link Between Seized Material, Pawar'

Lubna.Kably@timesofindia.com

Mumbai: In her capacity as legal heir of her late husband, deputy chief minister **Sunetra Ajit Pawar** has secured relief from the Income-tax Appellate Tribunal (ITAT), which quashed proceedings initiated under Section 153C of the Income-tax Act and deleted the addition of over Rs 32 crore as unexplained income. While the tax department put forward diaries and digital material to prove that Ajit Pawar was the recipient of certain alleged transactions in financial year 2019-20, the ITAT bench found the evidence insufficient.

Sunetra Pawar's role in the proceedings was procedural. During the pendency of the appeal, Ajit Pawar passed away in a plane crash, following which she was brought on record. Section 153C proceedings are triggered when during a search on one person, the tax department finds material allegedly relating to another person and seeks to assess the other person's income based on seized 'evidence'. In this case, documents seized during a July 2020 search on the Triton Group led the department to treat Rs 32 crore as 'unexplained income' in the hands of Ajit Pawar, which would be subject to a harsh tax rate exceeding 70%.

The ITAT bench comprising judicial member Amit Shukla and accountant member Makarand Vasant Mahadeokar upheld the order of the Commissioner (Appeals). They pointed out that section 153C proceedings were unsustainable in the absence of legally admissible and credible evidence. The tribunal, in particular, flagged the reliance on data from the Truecaller app as insufficient.

INSUFFICIENT EVIDENCE

- Treatment of ₹32.14 cr as undisclosed income in hands of late Ajit Pawar quashed by ITAT
- Section 153C proceeding held invalid owing to lack of credible evidence
- No clear nexus established between the seized material and Ajit Pawar
- Truecaller data, Whatsapp data held insufficient

During the search and seizure operation conducted on the Triton Group, handwritten diaries and notebooks were recovered from Jiten Pujari, who was associated with the group. The documents contained entries of alleged cash transactions of Rs 32 crore against a person identified only by the initials "DD". Based on these entries and digital material such as WhatsApp chats, SMS exchanges and mobile contact details, the I-T officer concluded that "DD" referred to Ajit Pawar and initiated proceedings under Section 153C. The I-T officer treated this sum as unexplained income for Ajit Pawar in 2019-20.

Before the tribunal, the I-T department argued that the identity of "DD" could be reasonably linked to Ajit Pawar through corroborative circumstances. It relied on a mobile number stored as "DD Personal" in the phone of an individual associated with the Triton group. This number, on the Truecaller app appeared as "Ajit Pawar Baramati". The I-T department also cited WhatsApp chats referring to "Dada", a name commonly associated with Ajit Pawar and contended that the diaries and digital records formed a coherent evidentiary chain pointing towards him.

Counsel for Sunetra Pawar (legal heir) countered that the jurisdictional requirements for invoking Section 153C were not met.

The provision requires that seized material must belong to or relate to a person other than the searched person. It was argued that these conditions were not satisfied in the present case. The seized diaries were recovered from Jiten Pujari's possession, and Ajit Pawar was neither their author nor custodian. His name did not appear in the documents. The entire case, it was argued, rested on the assumption that the initials "DD" referred to him—an inference that was speculative and legally untenable.

The ITAT bench agreed with this contention. It noted that the author of the diaries had not identified Ajit Pawar as the person denoted by "DD" and had instead explained that the abbreviation was used generically for high-value transactions. In the absence of any direct evidence linking Pawar to the entries, the tax tribunal held that the "primary evidentiary link" was missing.

It further observed that once the jurisdictional requirement of establishing a legally sustainable nexus between the seized material and the taxpayer failed, the entire assessment collapsed. Consequently, the addition could not be sustained.

Rejecting the reliance on digital evidence, the tax tribunal held that WhatsApp chats and other electronic material did not contain explicit references to the diary entries. It also found the attempt to link the initials "DD" with a mobile contact and to rely on crowd-sourced Truecaller data to be tenuous and farfetched.

Digital information, the bench emphasised, cannot form the sole basis of tax additions unless supported by credible authentication and corroboration.

Retd HAL staff gets HC relief after 14 yrs

Pinto.Deepak @timesofindia.com

Hyderabad: More than 14 years after a retired employee of the Hindustan Antibiotics Ltd (HAL) was booked in a criminal case — approving a sub-standard drug — the Telangana high court quashed all charges against him and even imposed a fine on the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) for implicating him without enough evidence.

SUB-STANDARD DRUG

Justice Anil Kumar Jukanti observed that his prosecution is a "sheer abuse of the process of law" and a violation of fundamental rights and ordered CDSCO to pay "exemplary costs (fine)" of Rs 50,000 to the 75-year-old former zonal manager of HAL. It found that the officer retired months before the drug was even manufactured.

The case dates back to 2010 when drug inspectors seized samples of Roxythromycin tablets (used to treat bacterial infections), manufactured by a private pharma company and supplied through CDSCO from the Central Hospital, South Central Railways, at Secunderabad and found that they were manufactured in March 2009 and weren't of "standard quality".

Following a report from a govt laboratory, the drug authorities filed a criminal complaint in 2012, and named the petitioner as the primary accused. However, during legal proceedings, the HC found that the petitioner retired on Jan 31, 2009 — two months before the substandard batch was produced. The HC noted that the authorities relied on old records to link him to the company's operations.

Larger animals have fled to safer places: Forest officials

▶Continued from page 1

An IAF helicopter carried out limited sorties using a Bambi bucket to drop water, but operations were halted after winds intensified. More than 100 local volunteers have joined operations. Crews are digging fire lines, positioning response vehicles at strategic and critical locations, and using hose-fitted units to contain spread. Parsons Valley and Pykara forests are ecologically sensitive, home to tigers, elephants and rare plant species. Officials said larger animals may have fled to safer areas and are likely to return, while reptiles and smaller fauna may have suffered heavier losses.

Doctors still puzzled by family's deaths, cops wait for forensic reports

▶Continued from page 1

The deceased Bhendi Bazaar residents were identified as Abdulla Dodakia (44), who owned a mobile phone accessories shop in Andheri, his wife Nasreen (35), and daughters Ayesha (16) and Zainab (12). Doctors at JJ Hospital, where three of the victims received final emergency treatment, are just as puzzled. The spate of deaths began around 10.30 am with Zainab, then Nasreen three hours later, Ayesha around 5.15 pm and Abdulla around 10.15 pm.

JJ Marg police said Abullah's brother and other relatives live close by and all left for their homes soon after the feast. "The statements of Abdullah and Ayesha were recorded. They said they experienced vomiting and diarrhea after eating the watermelon. No foul play is suspected as of now as post-mortem and forensic reports are awaited," said a police officer. The samples of the watermelon have been sent for testing and a report is awaited.

Between 5am and 5.30am on Sunday, all four started reporting symptoms of vomiting with severe discomfort. Neighbours first took the family members to Saboo Siddique Hospital near Mohammed Ali Road, where Zainab was declared dead. Abdulla and Nasreen were transferred to JJ Hospital, followed by Ayesha. "We tried everything, and the strongest antibiotics were administered," said a doctor at the emergency ward. Forensic doctors said samples of viscera have been preserved for further analysis.

KARNATAKA INDUSTRIAL AREAS DEVELOPMENT BOARD
(A Government of Karnataka Undertaking)
No.2, 2/1 and 2/3, Kalidasa Marg, 1st Main Road, Gandhinagar
Bengaluru - 560 009. Phone No. 080-22265383, website: www.kiadb.in

No. IADB/ENGG/ETND-EP-08/214/2026-27 Date: 27.04.2026

SHORT TERM NOTICE INVITING TENDER
(Through GOK Karnataka Public Procurement Portal Only)

Item rate Tenders under two cover bid system is invited as per the Karnataka Transparency in Public Procurement Act 1999 and Rules 2000 through electronic procurement portal from eligible Contractors who have got adequate financial resources, suitable construction equipments, technical man power & sufficient past experience for the following works :

Name of the Works : 1) Formation of Roads, levelling of park area and Construction of drain, culverts, compound wall at the premises of M/s HAMUL in Subalyout-4 Of Hassan Growth centre industrial area, Hassan. **2)** Establishment of Plug & Play Infrastructure for Manufacturing / Assembly of Electricity Vehicle Component, battery pack assembly, charging infrastructure and testing centre at plot no.1B of EV Block, Harohalli 5th Phase Industrial Area, Ramanagara Taluk, Bengaluru South District.

The last date and time for receipt of tender is : **14.05.2026** upto **4.00 pm.**

Applicants May Download Bidding Documents from the Karnataka Public Procurement Portal **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in.**

Sd/-
DIPR/CP/387/NR/2026-27 Chief Engineer-1, KIADB Bengaluru

RAIL WHEEL FACTORY
YELAHANKA,
BENGALURU – 560 064.
Website: www.rwf.indianrailways.gov.in

Corrigendum to Tender Notice No. RWF/W/26-27/02 dt: 21.04.2026

1. Additions in the tender documents under the above tender notice may please be noted:
Document Description: 1) Electrical Scope of Work. 2) S&T Scope of Work. 3) MIS Scope of Work.
2. Correction in Schedule **01-Electrical Items**, the Sl. No. 33 may be read as Supply & installation of 400 mm sweep wall fan as per scope of work.
All other terms and conditions remains unaltered.

Deputy Chief Engineer

PSPCL Punjab State Power Corporation Limited
(Regd. Office : PSEB Head Office, The Mall, Patiala-147001)
Corporate Identification Number (CIN) U40109PB2010SGC033813
Website : www.pspcl.in (Contact Number 9646123323)

Tender Inquiry No. PPR -10/ 2026 Dated: 26.04.2026

Chief Engineer/PP&R Organization, Shed No. D-3, Shakti Vihar, PSPCL, Patiala invites E-tender under three part bid system for supply of electrical energy from interstate/intrastate sources viz. Generators, Traders having Valid Inter State Trading License issued by CERC for interstate trading of energy, intrastate trading license issued by PSERC for intrastate trading of energy, State Electricity Boards, State Electricity Utilities, States, IPPs & CPPs from 15th May 2026 to 30th September 2026. The link for the e-Bidding portal is www.mstcecommerce.com and is also available on the website of Ministry of Power (www.Powermin.nic.in) and PFC Consultancy Limited (www.pfcindia.com). For detailed NIT & tender specifications please refer to **www.mstcecommerce.com** from 26.04.2026 onwards.

Note:- Corrigendum and addendum, if any will be published online at **www.mstcecommerce.com**

C 533/26, DPR/Pb.: 1079/12/2026-27/10915

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Office of the Additional Chief Engineer PHED, Region - Kota.
Phone : 0744-2504614 E-mail : ACE.KOT. PHED@RAJASTHAN.GOV.IN

No. ACE/PH/KR/Ar-II/2026-27/541 Dated: 23.04.2026

CORRIGENDUM NO. 01

Following corrigendum is issued to the NIT no. 01/2026-27of this office for the "Water Supply Scheme for Augmentation of UWSS Kota-South, District Kota including 05 years O&M after 01 year of Defect Liability period under AMRUT 2.0" Estimated cost Rs. 20895.26 Lacs.:-

S. No.	Reference	Existing provision	Amended provision
1	Vol-1 of TD 2.0 Technical Experience Criteria: 2.1 Project Execution (Contract of similar nature)	Requirement in terms of value for fulfillment of eligibility criteria Execution and successful commissioning of one of the following: (a) Three similar works each costing not less than 6,268.58 Lakh. OR (b) Two similar works each costing not less than 8,358.10 Lakh. OR (c) One similar work costing not less	Requirement in terms of value for fulfillment of eligibility criteria Execution and successful commissioning of one of the following: (a) Three similar works each costing not less than 6,268.58 Lakh. OR (b) Two similar works each costing not less than 8,358.10 Lakh. OR (c) One similar work costing not less than 10,447.63 Lakh.

All other terms & conditions will remain unchanged.

Sd/-
(Deepak Kumar Jha)
Additional Chief Engineer
PHED, Region - Kota

DIPR/C/7443/2026

NORTH WESTERN KARNATAKA ROAD TRANSPORT CORPORATION
CENTRAL OFFICES, HUBBALLI

TENDER NOTIFICATION NO.02/2026-27 DATE: 27-04-2026

Through Karnataka Public Procurement Portal (KPPP)

Tenders are invited from the interested bidders for supply of the materials as shown below:-

Sl.No.	Description of the tender	Tender Value (Approx.)
1	Air Suspension Parts	Rs.554 lakh
2	Wheel Bolt and Axie Stud with Nuts	Rs.447 lakh
3	Pistons, Piston Rings and Cylinder liners	Rs.318 lakh
4	Adblue for BS-VI Leyland Vehicler (Shrt Team Tender)	Rs.250 lakh
5	250 Nos. of the Desktop Computers (Short Team Tender)	Rs.220 lakh
6	Aluminium Extrusions (Short Team Tender)	Rs.210 lakh
7	Automotive Cables and LT Wires	Rs.153 lakh
8	Plistic Blow Moulded Passenger Seat Assemby for City Buses	Rs.82.50 lakh
9	Automotive Bulbs	Rs.69 lakh
10	GP Coils	Rs.40 lakh

Last date and time for submission of bids: For the tenders at **Sl. No.1 to 3 is 27-05-2026** & for the tenders at **Sl. No.4 to 10 it is 12-05-2026** till **17.30 Hrs.**
For details visit website :http://kppp.karnataka.gov.in Or Contact Mobile Phone **No. 7022009113.**

Sd/-
Controller of Stores & Purchases,
(Tender Inviting Authority)
DIPR/Dharwad/97/Deshpandepublicity/2026-27

KARNATAKA INDUSTRIAL AREAS DEVELOPMENT BOARD
(A Government of Karnataka Undertaking)
No.2, 2/1 and 2/3, Kalidasa Marg, 1st Main Road, Gandhinagar
Bengaluru - 560 009. Phone No. 080-22265383, website: www.kiadb.in

No. IADB/ENGG/ETND-EP-07/211/2026-27 Date: 27.04.2026

SHORT TERM NOTICE INVITING TENDER
(Through GOK Karnataka Public Procurement Portal Only)

Item rate Tenders under two cover bid system is invited as per the Karnataka Transparency in Public Procurement Act 1999 and Rules 2000 through electronic procurement portal from eligible Contractors for the following works :

Name of the Works : 1) Providing Road Fixtures at Phase-2 of Hi-Tech Defence and Aerospace Park, Bengaluru Rural District (Reserved for SC). **2)** Road Safety measures at Hi-Tech Defence and Aerospace Park, Phase-2 (Haraluru-Muddenahalli), Bengaluru Rural District (Reserved for SC).

The last date and time for receipt of tender is : **11.05.2026** upto **4.00 pm.**

Applicants May Download Bidding Documents from the Karnataka Public Procurement Portal **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in.**

Sd/-
DIPR/CP/388/NR/2026-27 Chief Engineer-1, KIADB Bengaluru

JHARKHAND URBAN INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT COMPANY LIMITED
(Govt. of Jharkhand Undertaking)
JUIDCO Bhawan, Kutchery Road, Ranchi-834001, Jharkhand. Ph No.: +91-651-2225878,
CIN: U45200JH2013SGC001752, e-mail Id-juidcolimited@gmail.com

NIT No.: JUIDCO/NIT/Jail Chk to AE Chk/RNC/703 Date- 27.04.2026
e-Procurement (Tender Notice)

1	Name of Work	Hardscape & Softscape development of street and resurfacing & refurbishing of road from Jail Chowk to Albert Ekka Chowk (Length-963 m) in Ranchi.
2	Mode of Bid Submission	e-tendering (http://jharkhandtenders.gov.in)
3	Estimated Cost (Rs.)	Rs 11,44,52,764/- (Rupees Eleven Crore Forty Four Lakhs Fifty Two Thousand Seven Hundred and Sixty Four) Only
4	Time of Completion	11 Months
5	Tender Fee and Bid Security to be submitted online	Tender document fee: Rs 25,000/- (Rupees Twenty-Five Thousand) only. **Non-Refundable.** Bid Security: Rs 11,45,000.00/- (Eleven Lakhs Forty Five Thousand) only
6	Date/Time of Publication of Tender on Website	28.04.2026 at 15:00 Hrs.
7	Last Date/Time of Bid Submission	20.05.2026 at 17:00 Hrs.
8	Date/Time of opening of Bid	21.05.2026 at 17:00 Hrs.
9	Bid Submission Address	Jharkhand Urban Infrastructure Development Company Limited, JUIDCO Bhawan, Kutchery Chowk, Ranchi, Jharkhand- 834001
10	Helpline Number of e-procurement Cell	0651-2225878

Further details can be seen on website http://jharkhandtenders.gov.in

Sd/-
Project Director (Technical)
JUIDCO Ltd, Ranchi
PR.NO.378552 Urban Development and Housing(26-27):D

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personal

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Mohan Kumar A alias A.C Mohan Kumar R/at 80, 3rd Cross, Mutturayaswamy Layout, Sunkadakatte, Bangalore 560091 have changed my name as Mohan Kumar A C vide affidavit dated 25/04/2026 sworn before Advocate & Notary Devaraja E Bangalore.

I Priyanka spouse of Samandar Singh Chauhan resident of Bhinmal, Dist-Jalore(Rajasthan) have changed my name from Priyanka to Priyanka Chauhan vide affidavit no. IN-GJ39738567859118Y Dated 28 Mar 26 before District court Bhuj-kutch

I, Ramamoorthi M, s/o Mani, have changed the name of my 13 months old minor son from MILLIRAN BR to MILIRAN BR, presently residing at no.3/296(1) Narasamma Colony, alasanatam, Hosur, Krishnagiri Dt, Tamil Nadu-635109. Vide affidavit dated 12/3/2026, notary G. MALLIKARJUNAPPA

I Khyrunissa Begum W/o Shaik Abdul Kareem Resident of 266, GF-1, 9th Cross, Lakshmi Road, Shanthi Nagar Bangalore 560027 have changed my name to KHAIRUNISSA BEGUM for all future purposes

I, Vinita Mehta , W/O; Rajan Mehta,R/O:I 2403, Mantri Serenity, Kanakapura Rd, Doddakalasandra Metro Station, Subramanyapura, BLR- 560062.Have changed my name as Vineeta Mehta.

GENERAL

I, Nandhiswari W/o Gururaj S Badiger residing at 23 Riches Regal layout Kalkere Bengaluru-43, have changed my name to Nandeshwari vide affidavit dated 25/04/2026 sworn before notary Uday Kumar.K Bengaluru

CELEBRATIONS

GREETINGS & FELICITATIONS

CONGRATULATIONS **OMKAR** Kamath for securing 98% in 2025-26 SSLC examinations!! Wishing you all the very best!!

S. E. RAILWAY – TENDER

For and on behalf of the President of India, the Chief Engineer (CON)/S, South Eastern Railway, Garden Reach, Kolkata-700043 invites E-tender for the following work. Following tender has been uploaded on website **www.ireps.gov.in**. The tender will be closed **at 12.00 hrs.** on due date. **e-Tender Notice No.: 4615-GRC-CE-C-SO-04-2026, Date: 24.04.2026. Brief Description of work:** Composite work for Development of infrastructure facilities for maintenance of HHP Electric Locomotives in ELKP Loco Shed, Kharagpur, South Eastern Railway and other allied miscellaneous works under jurisdiction of Dy. CE/Con/II/Kharagpur, South Eastern Railway. **Approx. Cost:** ₹ 72.42 Crore. **Bid Security:** ₹ 1,44,83,900. **Completion Period:** 24 months. **Closing Date:** 26.05.2026. Interested tenderers may visit website **www.ireps.gov.in** for full details/description/specification of the tenders and submit their bids online. In no case manual tender for this item will be accepted. **N.B.:** Prospective bidders may regularly visit **www.ireps.gov.in** to participate in all other tenders. **(PR-89)**

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GOVERNMENT OF KARNATAKA
NATIONAL HEALTH MISSION
Karnataka State Health & Family Welfare Society
1st Floor, Aarogya Soudha, Magadi Road, Bengaluru – 560023.
Ph : 080-23295103, Email Id: pdrch-hfws@karnataka.gov.in

Notification No: NHM/DD/IMM/01/2026-27 (E-2133052) Date: 27.04.2026
IND No. NHM/2026-27/IND-0041 Date: 27.04.2026

Tender through e-Procurement
"For Supply of Indelible Polio Marker Pens for Pulse Polio Program"

National Health Mission (NHM) invites tender from Manufacturers/Authorized Dealer to participate with necessary documents for **Supply of Indelible Polio Marker Pens for Pulse Polio Program under National Health Mission.**

The detailed notification regarding eligibility and other details can be obtained by logging on to **www.kppp.karnataka.gov.in.** The tender document can be downloaded through "e-procurement portal" from **27/04/2026** onwards and last date for receipt of tender is on or before **05/05/2026** at 05.30pm. Further details can be obtained from the office of the undersigned during the office hours from 11:00 am to 05:30 pm.

Sd/-
DIPR/CP/383/Zen/2026-27 Project Director (RCH)

Notice Inviting Re-Tender

Unified Service Portal for implementation of Mukhya Mantri Sehat Yojana - MMSY

Online Competitive bids are invited from an ICT Company / entity registered under the Companies Act of India, 1956 / The Partnership Act 1932 / Limited Liability Partnership Act, 2008. / Parent Company with 100% Subsidiaries.
The Tender Document shall be available on the website/ e-tender portal eproc.punjab.gov.in with effect from **28.04.2026**. The Bidders shall submit their Bids on this website/ e-tender portal as per the guidelines specified in the Tender Document. It shall be the responsibility of the Bidders to regularly check the website/ e-tender portal for any notice/ addenda issued in this regard.

Following schedule will be observed in this regard:

Last date and time of Bid submission (on e-tender portal):	08-05-2026
Last date and time of submission of hard copy of only Technical Bid (Not Financial Bid):	11-05-2026
Date & Time of opening of online Technical Bid:	11-05-2026

All correspondence/ communications on the Tender Document should be made at the above address and at email id: shapunjab.tender25@gmail.com

Sd/-
Chief Executive
Officer State Health Agency, Punjab
DPR/Pb.: 1957/12/2026-27/10939

CBSE terminates Puducherry's French connection in schools

Bosco.Dominique@timesgroup.com

Puducherry: A recent circular from CBSE directing schools to implement National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCFSE 2023), will effectively remove French as a language option in schools in the Union territory of Puducherry, a former French enclave.

> **The move is a direct attack on Puducherry's unique cultural identity**
> — V Balasubramanian, PUDUCHERRY STATE STUDENTS AND PARENTS WELFARE ASSN PRESIDENT

The new rules mandate that students study three languages (one foreign and two Indian) starting Class VI. The choice made in Class VI will be their elective options for Classes IX and X. The medium of instruction in all schools here, barring three (French medium), is English. Hence, the students must now choose two Indian languages. Similar is the situation in CBSE schools across the country, yet when it happens in Puducherry where people cherish their French connection, it causes much heartburn. The board, in a circular dated April 9, asked the schools to implement the changes under the new rules and upload the details to the CBSE portal.

SPOTLIGHT

NPS Insights

Where does your NPS money get invested?
Your contribution is mainly invested in:
- Equity (E): Stocks of top 250 listed companies along with REITs, Gold and Silver ETFs
- Corporate Debt (C): Corporate bonds with the rating of AA and above
- Government Securities (G): Government Securities, State Development Loans, PSU Bonds

This ensures a balance between growth, safety and stability.

Who invests your funds in NPS?
A: Your funds under NPS are managed and invested by Pension Funds, registered with and regulated by the PFRDA. The list of Pension Funds is available on www.pfrda.org.in

What are the Investment choices under NPS?
A: Under NPS, you can choose between the following frameworks based on your investment preference and risk appetite.

Active Choice: You decide how your contribution is allocated—Equity (up to 75% -Tier I, upto 100% -Tier II), Corporate Debt (up to 100% in both Tiers), and Government Securities (up to 100% in both Tiers).

Auto Choice (Life Cycle Fund): Investments are automatically tapered based on age to safeguard the corpus, with options—LC-75 -High (75% equity), LC-50 -Moderate (50%) and LC-25- Low (25%). Equity reduces from age 35; Aggressive Life Cycle Fund has 50% equity upto age 45, then tapering begins.

Multiple Scheme Framework: Choose pension schemes with equity allocation up to 100%, aligning investments with your retirement goals and risk appetite.

Subscriber Education and Protection Fund (SEPF) Initiative, by Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
NATIONAL CENTRE FOR DISEASE CONTROL
(DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF HEALTH SERVICES)
22-SHAM NATH MARG, DELHI – 110 054
PUBLIC NOTICE

Applications are invited for engagement of the 7 Non-Medical Scientists, for a period of one year or till regular officers join, whichever is earlier, at NCDC, Delhi and its branches, through Screening cum Selection Mode at NCDC, 22-Sham Nath Marg (Near Civil Lines Metro Station), Delhi- 110 054, as under:

Name of the post	No. of posts	Details of Vacancy	Place of Posting
Assistant Director (Entomology)	1	OBC	NCDC, Delhi
Deputy Assistant Director (Entomology)	3	UR EWS-1 ST-1	NCDC, Delhi-2 NCDC, Patna-1
Deputy Assistant Director (Bio-Chemistry)	1	UR	NCDC, Delhi
Deputy Assistant Director (Microbiology)	1	OBC	NCDC, Delhi
Deputy Assistant Director (Veterinary)	1	UR	NCDC, Delhi

The last date of submission of application is 14.05.2026. The application must reach this office on or before 14.05.2026, by speed post/ by hand on all working days from 10.00 AM to 5.00 PM at General Services Section, Room No. 202, NCDC, 22 -Sham Nath Marg, Delhi - 110054. Application received after 14.05.2026 will not be entertained.

After scrutiny of the application forms, only eligible candidates as per ToR will be informed through email to appear for interview with date and time.

The Educational Qualification, ToR and other conditions may be viewed on the NCDC Website: www.ncdc.mohfw.gov.in.

NOTE: The Competent Authority reserves the right to modify or cancel selection process (in part or full), if need so arises without issuing any further reasons whatsoever.

Assistant Director (Admin.)
Email: prakashdoval@ncdc.gov.in
Phone No. 011-23971875

CBC 17129/11/0001/2627

PUBLIC NOTICE

Our client is desirous to develop all that piece and parcel of agricultural land bearing Survey No.58/2A1 (recorded as Survey No. 58/2A4 in the title documents and revenue records), situated at **Singasandra Village, Begur Hobli, Bangalore South Taluk, measuring in all about 3 Acres 21 Guntas inclusive of 22 Guntas kharab ("Schedule Property") with the present owner M/s.Viswa Promoter.**

Any person or persons asserting any right, title, interest in the Schedule Property or any part thereof, in any manner whatsoever or having any claim against the Schedule Property or the documents thereof or against the Owner or objecting to such transaction with our client, should write to the undersigned within **fifteen days** (15 days) from the date of issuance of this notice with all documentary proof on which they are basing and asserting their rights with regard to Schedule Property or any part thereof, after which period our client shall proceed on the basis that there are no claims of whatsoever nature with regard to the Schedule Property.

SCHEDULE

All that piece and parcel of agricultural land bearing Survey No.58/2A1 (recorded as Survey No.58/2A4 in the title documents and revenue records), situated at Singasandra Village, Begur Hobli, Bangalore South Taluk, measuring in all about 3 Acres 21 Guntas inclusive of 22 Guntas kharab and bounded on the: **EAST** : Survey Nos.58/1C & 58/1B (Old Survey No.58/1); **WEST** : Survey No.59; **NORTH** : Survey No.58/2A2; **SOUTH** : Road leading to Begur.

Sd/- (R.Sunitha)
Advocate,
CMS Indus Law,
No.101, 1st Floor, Embassy Classic,
#11, Vittal Mallya Road, Bangalore -560 001
Phone No.: +91-80- 4072 6600

अखिल भारतीय आयुर्विज्ञान संस्थान, अंसारी नगर, नई दिल्ली-110029
ALL INDIA INSTITUTE OF MEDICAL SCIENCES, ANSARI NAGAR, NEW DELHI-110029
परीक्षा अनुभाग
EXAMINATION SECTION
प्रवेश सूचना क्रमांक. / Admission Notice No. 55/2026

AIIMS, NEW DELHI-FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMME-JULY 2026 session

All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi invites Online applications for **Entrance Examination** through **online (CBT) mode** for admission in **Fellowship Programme, July, 2026** session. The details are given below:

Date for Online Registration of applications	
Registration Opens on	Registration closes on
17.04.2026(Friday)	01.05.2026 (Friday) (upto 5:00 P.M.)
Date of Entrance Examination	
26.05.2026 (Tuesday)	

Important: For Prospectus, detailed information etc. please visit the website www.aiimsexams.ac.in. All applicants are required to visit the website regularly since all subsequent corrigendum / addendum / updates will be uploaded on the website only.

AIIMS Exams

Sd/-
ASSISTANT CONTROLLER (EXAMS)

CBC 17112/11/0008/2627

भारतीय अंतरिक्ष विज्ञान एवं प्रौद्योगिकी संस्थान
Indian Institute of Space Science and Technology
(वि. अ. आयोग अधिनियम 1956 की धारा 3 के अधीन मानित विश्वविद्यालय घोषित)
(Declared as Deemed to be University under Section 3 of the UGC Act, 1956)
भारत सरकार, अंतरिक्ष विभाग के तहत स्वायत संस्थान
(An Autonomous Institute under Department of Space, Govt. of India)
वलियमला, तिरुवनंतपुरम 695 547, केरल
Valiamala, Thiruvananthapuram 695 547, Kerala
NAAC द्वारा 'A++' मान्यता प्राप्त / NAAC 'A++' Accredited

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ADMISSION TO Ph.D. PROGRAMME JULY SESSION - 2026

आवेदन प्रक्रिया केवल ऑनलाइन रूप से ही की जाएगी
Application process will be done ONLINE only

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Notification for admission to Ph.D.programme is available at:
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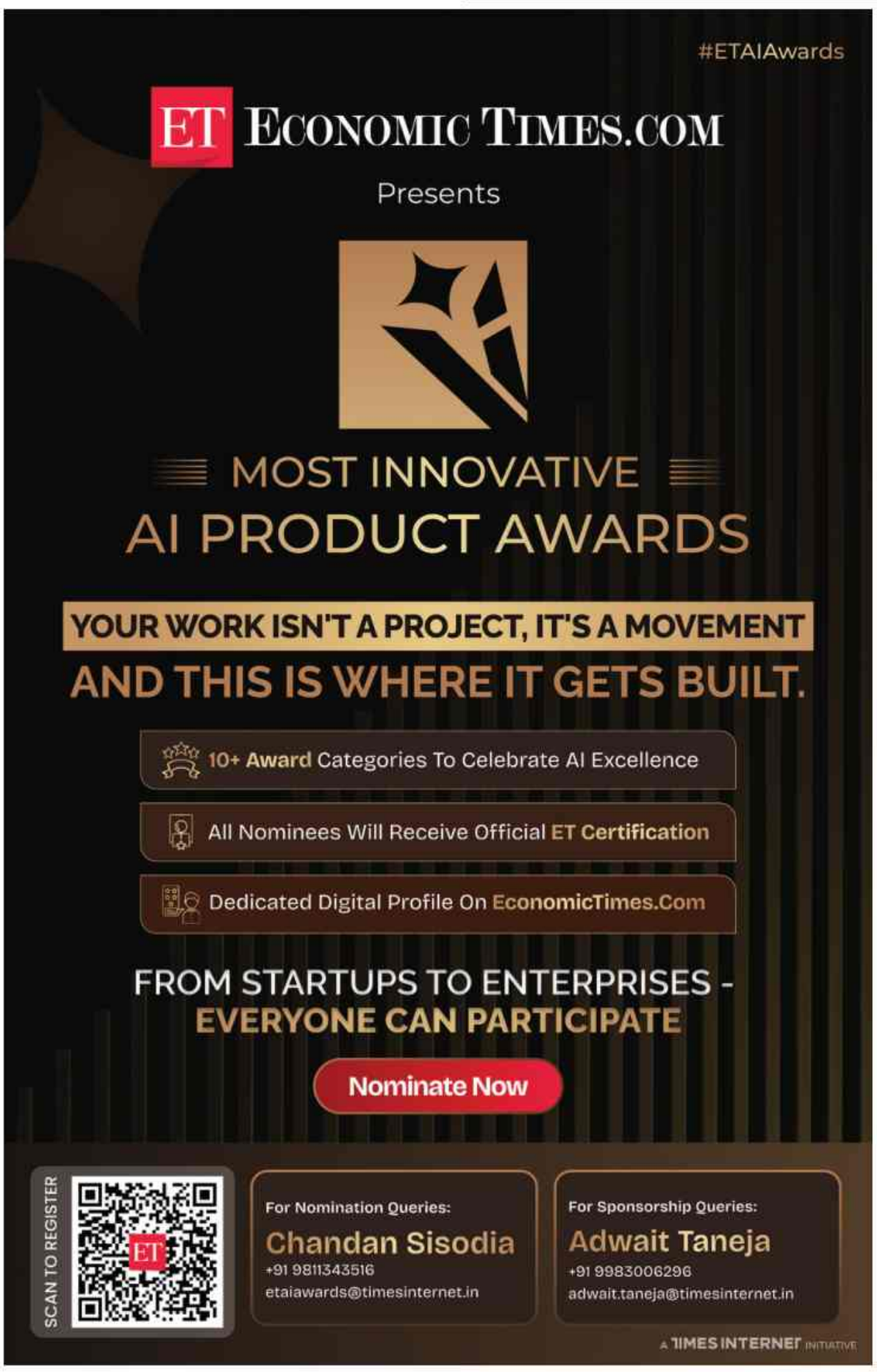
आवेदन भरने की अंतिम तिथि
Last date to apply: 25th May 2026

जानकारी के लिए / For Queries: admissions@iist.ac.in
संपर्क सूत्र / Contact 0471- 2568477/ 618 (on working days 0900 - 1700 hrs)

डीन (शैक्षिकी) / Dean (Academics)



A thought for today

Those who say nothing wrong often say nothing much at all

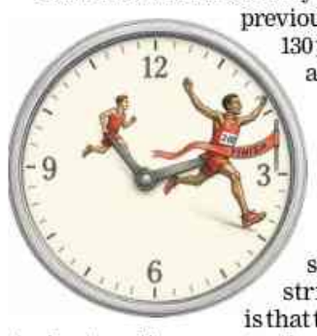
PALANTIR manifesto

For The Record

Two men ran a marathon in less than 2 hours on Sunday, proving again 'barriers' are just a state of mind

Sunday will go down in history like May 6, 1954, when Roger Bannister broke the 4-minute-mile barrier, or July 13, 1985, when Sergey Bubka pole-vaulted over 6m. It's one of those rare days when humans have shoved "impossible" so hard, it's stumbled back. Sunday was the 2-hour-marathon barrier's turn. Kenyan Sabastian Sawe finished the London Marathon with 30 seconds to spare, and Ethiopia's Yomif Kejelcha came in 11 seconds later. The result wasn't merely unexpected, but unthinkable. Over the past 10 years, millions of dollars have been spent in pursuit of a sub-2-hour marathon. Nike famously worked with Eliud Kipchoge, designing special shoes, training, and diet plans for him. But his 1:59:40 finish at a 2019 exhibition run didn't qualify as a record, because of all the help he had. Sawe and Kejelcha made their mark on Sunday simply, the regular way.

Sawe's new record is only 65 seconds faster than Kelvin Kiptum's previous marathon record, set in 2023. But over 130 years of the modern marathon – starting at the 1896 Olympics – runners have knocked off an hour. How fast might we be a century from now? Is a 1-hour marathon possible? Probably not. Per American physiologist Michael Joyner, a time of 1:57:58 would hit the human metabolic limit. But that's still 92 seconds of improvement worth striving for. And the thing about barriers is that they're often mental. Before Bannister's 4-minute mile, experts theorised that running so fast could be fatal. Just six weeks after Bannister's feat, Australian John Landy broke his record by 1.4 seconds. Don't be surprised if more male marathoners finish in less than two hours this year.



Nor is Joyner's limit cast in stone. Till the 1960s, everyone thought 2.25m was the highest a man could jump. Until Dick Fosbury, a 21-year-old engineering student, changed everything with his 'Fosbury Flop' technique. Who knows what new techniques and gear will do for human performance. It's the age of specialists anyway. Bannister was a doctor, a respected neurologist, who had a bowl of porridge, worked the morning shift at his hospital, took a train to Oxford, and ran his record-breaking race in heavy spikes. Now, there's science, and teams, behind everything. Sawe and Kejelcha ran in shoes weighing less than 100g each. We don't know what advances lie ahead. But we do know that records are made to be broken, and they will be.

Accidental Eden

Flora and fauna have been thriving in Chernobyl, only because man has stayed away

It has been called the 'forbidden experiment'. The kind we could never, ever be justified in purposely initiating. Forty years ago, the worst nuclear disaster in history sent a radioactive cloud billowing from Chernobyl across Europe, emptied entire towns, uprooted 350,000 lives. In an unforeseen twist, it also triggered extraordinary rewilding. In parts of the exclusion zone, the landscape appears to have rolled back centuries. Almost a 'factory reset'. Wolves and bears roam free once more. What should have been a place of pure darkness, the most blighted on earth, has instead been reclaimed by cascading ecological forces. Man – pompous, self-appointed custodian of this planet – has made precisely one contribution to all of it: Exit stage left.

Like big mammals, birds, trees, and other organisms are also enjoying a joyous rejuvenation. There are bacteria thriving *inside* the nuclear reactor walls, others immobilising the dissolved uranium, fungi breaking down contaminated materials. They are taking energy from the very things that make the site deadly to us. To be clear, the 1986 nuclear accident did inflict massive mortality and mutation on forests, mammals, invertebrates, soil microorganisms. Only with time, did the positive, adaptive responses emerge. Yes, very much like Eliot's Wasteland, "breeding lilacs out of the dead land".

Russia's war on Ukraine has shattered this fragile peace. Drones have struck the 'sarcophagus' built to entomb the radioactive debris. Flora and fauna have adapted to chronic radiation in a phenomenal way, but 'we the problem' remains. We still cannot leave them alone. Our military blundering threatens fresh devastation. Chernobyl's true lesson is not that Nature can absorb our worst catastrophes, but that what Nature most needs to heal itself, is for us to get out of the way. This is grim comfort, but still a comfort, that when we render the planet uninhabitable for ourselves, which we seem bent on doing, everything else could still thrive.

Knights of the Oval Table

Their king has their measure as well as of his war

Lalit Mohan

King Donald-I was a very worried man. His decisions for the day depended on which side of the bed he had got up from, but it was almost noon, his favourite Field Marshal was sweating it out, waiting on the hot Islamabad tarmac, and he just could not remember which.

How the hell was he supposed to decide? To send Sir Vancelot, or not to send; to bomb or not to bomb – those were some of the questions that weighed on his mind. Decisions, decisions! He could toss a coin. Either way, there was a risk. As his wise predecessor, George Rush would say, if you don't succeed, you run the risk of failure.

Vancelot may have been right. He never wanted us to go to war. How come he is so clever. Ah! He has a smart wife. Some guys are lucky!

The King had been calling for a regime change. Lately he had been getting feedback that the entire world wanted a regime change. But not in Tehran. In DC! No wonder Vancelot was seen smirking. "@*&@!#*$," the King exploded with an imperious shake of his orange mop. He was good at expletives.

Actually, of all the knights, Sir Peter was his favourite. For him war was a video game and this King D was also good at. He practised it for days on end at his own Camelot, in Mar-a-Lago.

A third knight, Sir Marco, or is it Sir Macron, he often got confused, seemed to be in a sulk. Maybe he could be asked to fetch pizzas for everyone around the Oval table. Give him something to do.

We cannot put our boots on the ground, of this the King was certain. We don't want our soldiers to get killed. Because if you get killed you die. And Americans may die in street or school violence, they dislike doing so on the battlefield.

Better we ask the Arabs to do it. The Saudis are very brave people. Very brave. They will fight for their country to the last Pakistani soldier. And I, King Donald, can then declare victory. Again!

Bengal's urban upper classes want a softer Hindutva. Narrow win may spell trouble for TMC

Bhadraloks, BJP & Margin Of Victory

Rounak Bose

The second phase of Bengal election, on April 29, closer to Kolkata and its surrounding urban belt, is the harder test for BJP. Anger against Trinamool's 15 years in office is no longer scattered, BJP has sharper organisation now, and its language of Hindu consolidation appears to have found firmer ground in Bengal.

What it still, however, needs is a seal of respectability from sections of the educated Hindu middle class. In Bengal, that question cannot be separated from the older social world of Bhadraloks. The Bhadralok was never an electoral bloc or official social category. Historically, it referred to Bengal's educated upper-caste Hindu middle classes, many of them property-owning, who came to dominate public life in and around colonial Calcutta.

The old world that produced it has changed, but its social afterlife remains strong, especially in Kolkata and its older urban neighborhoods. It still names a class with caste privilege and strong self-image as custodian of Bengali civility. The Bhadralok has never voted as a bloc, though its acceptance can still make a party appear culturally legitimate in Bengal's urban middle-class spaces.

For BJP, the value is clear – it can make a vote for Hindutva appear like a vote for order & good sense. Rashbehari in South Kolkata gives this problem a constituency. BJP nominee Swapan Dasgupta's campaign here reads like an appeal to educated upper-caste, middle-class voters. His local 'manifesto' speaks of 'reviving' Kalighat and Adi Ganga. He has promised to protect and beautify Rabindra Sarobar, and give Rashbehari a more polished civic life, lined with cafes – telling South Kolkata that BJP can speak in the language of neighbourhood upkeep and cultural restoration.

Rashbehari has long been Trinamool ground. BJP's fighting there, through a figure like Dasgupta, with a long record in conservative politics, and legible to educated Hindu middle class. His campaign places BJP's politics inside familiar South Kolkata concerns – about cafes around Rabindra Sarobar, public spaces, and civic order. Idea is to make BJP sound less *bohiragoto* (outsider), more *bhadro* (genteel).

Mamata's power and charismatic public style, meanwhile, never depended on old Kolkata refinement. She challenged Left's hegemony by making herself legible to voters outside that world. This has long unsettled sections of the Bhadralok, who've seen her politics as a fall in standards they imagine for Bengal's public life. For years, that unease could coexist with acceptance of her dominance. Now, charges of recruitment scams, syndicate power, and lack of women's safety, have made that discomfort easier to express as a governance complaint. Yet, some of it still comes from a class discomfort, with Mamata's style.

While SIR controversy that made this election harsher will remain central until counting day, another question has emerged in the week between Phase 1 and Phase 2. Can BJP make itself acceptable to voters, who may dislike majoritarian aggression in public, but are willing to endorse the same politics, when it comes wrapped in the language of clean governance?

In Bhabanipur, the louder leader Suvendu Adhikari has carried out communal polarisation and confrontation with Mamata directly. Rashbehari in the same city gives Dasgupta a quieter assignment: make BJP respectable in spaces where it was once dismissed as too loud, too Hindi-belt, and too culturally distant.

Bengal has its own history behind this. Hindutva in the state certainly did not begin with BJP. As historians such as Joya Chatterji have shown, in late colonial Bengal, sections of upper-caste Bhadralok turned towards communal Hindu politics, when representative politics made Muslim and lower-caste claims harder, for upper-caste Hindu elites, to ignore. BJP is trying to turn that past into a present-day promise of order and cultural pride.

If sections of urban Bhadralok decide that voting BJP is a respectable way to remove Mamata, BJP will gain cultural permission from a class that often kept it at a distance in Bengal.

The writer is a PhD candidate in University of Delaware

Shaikh Mujibur Rehman

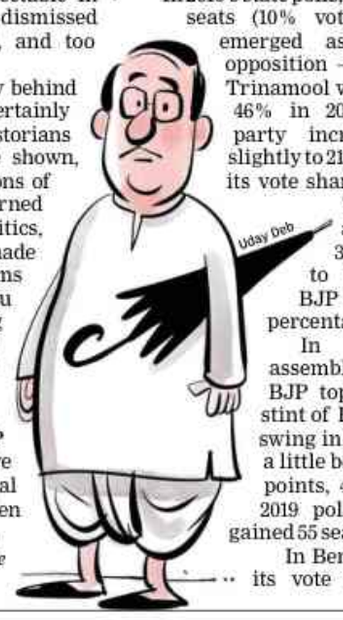
After voting completed on 152 Bengal seats last week, BJP is upbeat, but nobody is counting Trinamool out, yet – though in recent years, BJP has snatched states governed by non-BJP parties.

It wrested office from Naveen Patnaik's BJD in Odisha (2024), and Kejriwal's AAP in Delhi in 2025. Is Bengal next? While no one should doubt BJP's hunger for power, observers suggest two possible outcomes. One is a Trinamool return, albeit with a narrower margin than 2021's. The other is BJP's victory. Left and Congress, sadly, have become insignificant electoral players.

However, if Mamata returns to office with a reduced number of seats, it may open the possibility of a Maharashtra-like party split, and prospect of a BJP-led govt emerging through political manoeuvring. For a full-term stable govt, Trinamool would need to win with a significant margin, somewhat like its performance in 2021. At the same time, Mamata as leader of opposition would likely be far more aggressive than others such as Uddhav Thackeray.

POLLS 2026 Bengal, TN, Assam, Kerala

In 2016's state polls, BJP won 3 Bengal seats (10% votes). By 2021, it emerged as the principal opposition – 77 MLAs (39%). Trinamool won 211 seats with 46% in 2016. In 2021, the party increased its tally slightly to 213 seats, and raised its vote share to 49% almost.



Thus, while TMC added only about 3 percentage points to its vote share, BJP added nearly 28 percentage points.

In Odisha's 2024 assembly election, when BJP toppled the 24-year stint of BJD govt, the vote swing in BJP's favour was a little below 8 percentage points, 40% compared to 2019 polls's 33%. But it gained 55 seats.

In Bengal, BJP may see its vote share grow, but whether it'll become the new governing party or simply consolidate its position as principal opposition, all depend on how well it can convert votes into seats. In late 1980s, when BJP began witnessing major electoral gains, scholars argued it would remain largely confined to north India, because of its focus on Ayodhya movement. The south was once considered a no-go area for the party. But it diversified its strategy such, that by 1994, it was principal opposition for a short period in Karnataka, and went on to form govt.

BJP's Bengal campaign appears to follow its conventional template in high-octane state election campaigns, led by Modi and Amit Shah. At a recent pre-poll party meet of Bengal workers, Modi referred to what he described as an "atmosphere of fear" in Bengal, stating that, "murders, rapes, riots, and political violence have reached their peak". While Trinamool's governance record has been a major area of attack, 'ghuspethiyas' (infiltrators) continue to dominate the discourse.

Even during 2014 LS elections, when Modi campaigned on the slogan 'Sabka Sath, Sabka Vikas', he had raised the issue of infiltrators in Bengal, remarking, "You can write it down. After May 16, these Bangladeshis better be prepared with their bags packed."

BJP's known as an ideological party, but it has demonstrated flexibility in co-opting political veterans from other parties. In Bengal, BJP has similarly co-opted Suvendu Adhikari, once a trusted Mamata aide. But, Suvendu is no match for Assam's Himanta in either rhetoric or organisational skills. This, perhaps, remains a major weakness for BJP in Bengal.

Both in terms of campaign and rhetoric, this election has only deepened polarisation in Bengal society, and its main victims are Bengali Muslims. Bengal and Assam share close to 4,096km of border with Bangladesh.

According to Navine Murshid, author of *India's Bangladesh Problem*, the Bengali Muslim ethnic identity renders them Bangladeshi in Indian imagination. Sadly, this perception has made Bengalis – particularly working-class Bengalis – targets of hate campaigns in various parts of India, further straining India's fragile secular polity.

The writer is a political scientist at Jamia Millia Islamia

War's A Big Climate Changer, But Who Cares

Emissions at scale during conflicts are never talked about. Onus of tackling climate crisis cannot only be on the individual reducing his carbon footprint

S Janakarajan

Wars are discussed in terms of geopolitics, economic loss, and tragic human toll. What rarely enters public debate is another profound consequence of modern warfare – its massive contribution to environmental destruction and accelerated global carbon emissions. World is struggling to limit global warming to 1.5°C, and climate impact of military conflicts remains one of the most neglected dimensions of global climate policy.

Climate change discourse focuses on emissions from industries, transportation, agriculture, and fossil-fuel based energy systems. But the carbon footprint of military activities receives next to no attention. Wars' environmental damage – destruction of ecosystems, burning of cities, massive fuel consumption by military machinery, and emissions from post-war reconstruction – is absent from mainstream climate conversations.

One important reason for this silence lies in the way global climate reporting is structured. Under international climate agreements such as Kyoto Protocol (1997) and Paris Agreement (2015), reporting of GHG emissions from military activities is not mandatory. Many countries either partially report or exclude military emissions from their national GHG inventories, often citing national security concerns. This has created what researchers call a "military emissions gap" in global climate emission or footprint accounting.

Recent studies suggest that global militaries and their supply chains together account for roughly 5.5% of total global GHG emissions. If world's militaries were treated as a single country, they'd rank as world's fourth-largest emitter in the world. This estimate includes emissions not only from active combat operations, but also from military supply chains, weapons production, logistics networks, and global deployment systems.

Scientists have begun to estimate emissions from ongoing conflicts. Research on the Israel-Gaza war suggests the conflict generated roughly 31-32mn tonnes of CO_2 equivalent emissions within about 15 months. Nearly half of these came from tanks, aircraft operations, and bombings. Reconstruction of destroyed buildings alone could add another 30mn tonnes of emissions.

Similarly, Russia-Ukraine war is estimated to have generated around 230mn tonnes of CO_2 equivalent emissions so far – roughly comparable to annual emissions of several European countries combined.

The US-Israel-Iran war hasn't yet been assessed in terms of carbon emissions. But past military campaigns

Donetsk, Ukraine

suggest intensive air ops alone emit millions of tonnes of CO_2 within months.

Modern warfare's enormous carbon footprint arises from several sources – the most visible is the massive consumption of fossil fuels by military equipment and tech. Consider a modern combat aircraft such as the F-35 Lightning II. This fighter jet consumes roughly 5,600 litres of fuel per hour of flight. Since each litre of jet fuel produces about 2.5kg of CO_2 when burned, a single aircraft can emit nearly 14 tonnes of CO_2 in just one hour of operation.

To put this into perspective, the average person in India produces roughly 2 tonnes of carbon emissions in an entire year. In other words, one hour of flight by a single fighter jet can generate the equivalent of seven years of emissions by an average Indian citizen.

In combat, multiple aircraft operate simultaneously for several hours, while large naval fleets and aircraft carrier strike groups conduct extended missions. These operations multiply the massive scale of emissions.

Wars also produce other powerful climate impacts. Explosions, burning buildings, and large fires release black carbon. Black carbon is an especially dangerous climate pollutant because it absorbs sunlight very efficiently, and heats the atmosphere far more rapidly than CO_2 over short periods. When deposited on snow and ice, it accelerates melting and contributes to further warming.

Forests, wetlands, and agricultural lands are destroyed in war. This weakens nature's capacity to absorb carbon and maintain ecological balance. Climate impact of war doesn't end when fighting stops. Reconstruction of destroyed cities requires vast quantities of cement, steel, and other materials. Cement production alone accounts for nearly 8% of global CO_2 emissions.

Despite these realities, climate cost of military activities is invisible in international climate negotiations. This creates a striking moral paradox. Globally, individuals are encouraged to reduce their personal carbon footprints by driving less, conserving electricity, and limiting energy consumption. Yet large-scale wars have the freedom to emit millions of tonnes CO_2 without entering mainstream climate policy discussions.

This blind spot can no longer be ignored. Climate crisis cannot be addressed solely through technological solutions and lifestyle changes, while ignoring the enormous carbon footprint of wars.

The writer is former professor, MIDS

Calvin & Hobbes

Sacred*space*

When a child asks you something, answer him, for goodness sake. But don't make a production of it. Children are children, but they can spot an evasion faster than adults, and evasion simply muddles 'em.

Harper Lee

From Knowledge To Clarity: Shiva Sutra Way Of Living

Swami Sukhabodhananda

We know so much today…yet we are more confused than ever. We attend courses, read books, watch videos, collect endless information. Still, when life presents a small challenge, we feel disturbed. If knowledge is increasing, why is clarity not increasing? *Shiva Sutras* give a startling answer: *Gnanam Bandhanam*. Knowledge can become bondage.

This is a radical insight. From childhood, we are told that knowledge is power. But sages caution us that knowledge, which remains at the level of words, can imprison rather than liberate. The word is not the thing.

You can say 'water' a thousand times, but your thirst will not go. You can speak about love endlessly, but that is not the experience of love. In the same way, spiritual knowledge, when reduced to concepts and quotations, creates an illusion of understanding, without any real transformation. Today, many people are spiritually well-informed, but inwardly unchanged. They can quote scriptures, discuss philosophy, and even advise others. Yet, when situations don't go their way, they become anxious, reactive, restless. Because knowledge has not matured into clarity.

Shiva Sutras speak of Vidya Shakti not as an accumulation of information, but as clarity of perception. Clarity is very different from knowledge. Knowledge comes from outside, clarity arises from within. Knowledge fills the mind, clarity removes confusion. Life is dynamic and unpredictable. What it needs is not stored answers, but living intelligence. Clarity allows us to see situations as they are. It brings an inner alignment where thought, feeling, and action move together. But how do we move from knowledge to clarity?

THE SPEAKING TREE

The first step is to recognise that words are only pointers, like an address that helps you find a place. If we cling to the address and never travel, we will never reach. In spiritual life, many hold on to the 'address' teachings, language, and concepts, but miss the experience. *Shiva Sutras* invite us to go beyond words into direct awareness. Awareness is the space in which clarity arises. When the mind becomes quiet, observant, and attentive, it begins to see deeply. In such a state, insights are not borrowed; they are born.

Shiva Sutras also remind us that clarity must translate into action. It is not enough to understand; we must live that understanding. Otherwise, knowledge becomes a burden. There is a beautiful paradox here: true clarity simplifies life. It reduces inner conflict. Instead of overthinking, we begin to act with ease and spontaneity.

In a world overloaded with knowledge, what we truly need is clarity. Don't collect knowledge, cultivate clarity. Because clarity is not something you acquire…it is something you awaken within.

Swami Sukhabodhananda will conduct Shivaratri 2026 online celebration on April 29, 6.30-8am; Contact: 95135 60108/ 99017 77003

Why parents must plan for the new cost of early childhood

Dance, drama, music & more: as preschool enrichment surges, 'edutainment' is turning into a must-have budget item

Preeti.Kulkarni@timesofindia.com

Little Mihir, a five-year-old kindergartener in Mumbai, enjoys playing, reading stories, and spending time with the cats in his housing society. Yet, his daily routine extends well beyond such unstructured fun.

His mother, Neelam Mehta, 43, has enrolled the lively preschooler in five activity classes — dance, drawing, drama, phonics, and karate — along with summer camps. "I want him to be productively occupied. Now, he's already learning about the stars, planets and the digestive system. He was always good with words, and his speaking skills have improved further," she says.

Neelam Mehta (43)
Son, Mihir (5)
Mumbai

Activity classes: Dance, drawing, drama, phonics and karate
Annual expense: Rs 1 lakh
Objective: Keeping the child productively occupied, reducing screen time

"The rewards have been worth the monetary outgo. He enjoys engaging in these activities, which also aid overall personality development

'Enrichment' fund

Budget: Rs 1-1.2 lakh a year
Corpus needed: Rs 3-4 lakh over three pre-school years
The size will depend on the number and type of activities

Start early, invest right
- Ideal: At birth
- Practical: 6-12 months before preschool begins

Choose the right avenues
If planning early...
- Ultra short-term debt funds
- Arbitrage funds

If planning closer to need...
- Recurring deposits (RDs)
- Liquid mutual funds

Little stars, big aspirations

Inside the world of early enrichment

Popular after-school activities

The Early Years' Economics

The total cost of these 'child enrichment' classes? Close to Rs 1 lakh a year, just a tad lower than his kindergarten fees. Like Mihir, three-and-a-half-year-old Mithila too attends phonics and drawing classes. "We enrolled her into phonics classes about six months ago as I felt she could, and wanted to, express herself better," says her mother, Niyoti Mhatre, an artificial intelligence professional. The annual expenses for such classes, besides summer camps, amount to around Rs 85,000.

For a rising number of Indian urban families, such structured, paid 'enrichment' programmes are replacing free play. And, over three pre-primary years (nursery, junior and senior kindergarten), the costs could cross Rs 3-4 lakh. A mix of factors is driving parents to enroll their kids into after-school activities. They are driven by the need to focus the child's energy in meaningful ways, enhance cognitive skills, provide social exposure as well as intellectual stimulation and, indeed, reduce screen time. Busy work schedules and nuclear family setups are not the key reasons.

Peer pressure and the desire to prepare the child for an increasingly competitive future also play a role. Many parents don't mind shelling out significant sums — at times, equal to school fees — for this purpose.

"We've seen a rise in enquiries from parents of preschoolers for enrichment classes including dance, music, phonics, spoken English, drawing," says Rakesh Kalra, CEO, UrbanPro, a learning marketplace that connects students with tutors and institutes across India.

The Value Of Fun And Games

As per Unicef, 90% of the human brain's structure takes shape by the age of five. India's National Education Policy (NEP) stresses on the importance of activity-based learning, like logical thinking, drawing, drama, and music. "These early years (3-5 years) are crucial for not just academic growth, but also emotional intelligence, creativity and communication skills. These activities significantly improve their cognitive, emotional and social growth," says leading theatre personality Raell Padamsee, MD and CEO of ACE Productions.

Dr Indhuumathy Thayammal, consultant paediatrician, Rainbow Children's Hospital, Chennai, explains that neuroplasticity — the brain's ability to reorganise and form new connections in response to experiences — is exponential between the ages of one to five years. Parents and schools therefore, want their little ones to make the most of this phase of their lives.

"This is a vital phase, when children are naturally curious, observant and eager to understand the world around them. There is a noticeable shift in how parents approach early learning today. Many are looking beyond the standard classroom and recognising that these kinds of experiences play an equally important role in a child's overall development," says Neelu Kalro, vice principal, JBCN International School, Chembur.

Make It A Budgeted Expense

What young parents, or those who are planning a family, need to understand is that these activities should not be seen as mere hobbies that will not materially impact the monthly budgets. The total payout in a year can be close to your child's school fee. Affordability permitting, you can budget for annual spends of Rs 1-1.2 lakh a year, depending on the kind, and the number, of activities you wish your child to take up.

According to data from UrbanPro, dance classes, even for preschoolers, cost Rs 30,000-84,000 a year, depending on the city, the tutor's profile, online/offline mode, and so on. Fees for music classes can be Rs 36,000-1.2 lakh annually. Drawing, perhaps the most popular amongst all the activity classes, can set you back by Rs 24,000-72,000.

Parents can start planning financially for such activities as soon as the child is born. "In fact, it can start the moment the child is conceived. You can then look at ultra-short-term debt funds and arbitrage funds that are more remunerative and tax-efficient considering the investment tenure. On the other hand, if you plan for it later, then you can look at recurring deposits and liquid mutual funds," says Priyadarshini Mulye, a Sebi-registered investment adviser and founder of ARTHA FinPlan.

Abhishek Kumar, founder of Sahaj Money, believes parents should start planning for these expenses at least six to twelve months before the child starts preschool. "This will ensure that the additional costs do not disrupt the family's budget and other financial goals. Early preparation allows for the gradual accumulation of funds for such spending and provides a clearer picture of the total investment required for the academic year," he says. He also recommends a combination of a monthly recurring deposit or low-risk liquid mutual funds that can earn modest interest or return while ensuring capital remains easily accessible for extracurricular expenses.

Get The Balance Right

While such activity classes can be valuable for your child's growth, exercise discretion instead of giving in to peer pressure and enrolling your little one into multiple classes. "There is no harm in waiting to figure out the child's interests before enrolling them into courses. Otherwise, it'll be a waste of money, time and effort," says Mulye.

Extracurricular activities do help increase the brain's neuroplasticity, provided the kids enjoy them. "Parents attempt to make the most out of the first five years and reduce screen time by enrolling them on such after-school activities. But they should also encourage emotional intelligence in kids, meaning that if they do not enjoy an activity, they should be vocal about it, and parents should be receptive. Moderation is the key," says Dr Thayammal. Put simply, your kid should not see it as a forced activity or punishment.

Small EPS errors can hurt your pension later

Most EPS errors are fixable

Type of error	Remedy
Missing EPS contribution	Confirm eligibility; employer must revise ECR and pay arrears
EPS contribution for ineligible employee	Employer must revise ECR and pay excess into EPF, not EPS
Higher EPS contribution (exceeding statutory cap)	Employer must revise ECR and pay excess into EPF, not EPS
Incorrect EPS contribution (wrong salary)	Employer must revise ECR; excess EPS must be reversed to EPF or vice versa
Incorrect joining/exit date	Employer to update joining/leaving date in the portal; send joint declaration
Continuous service not showing in UAN	Past employer to update joining/leaving date in the portal; merge UANs if split

Sanket.Dhanorkar@timesofindia.com

Subscribers of the Employees' Provident Fund (EPF) diligently track the steadily rising balance in their EPF passbook: the combined pool of their own 12% contribution, a part of the employer's share (3.67%) and the accumulated interest. But its quieter counterpart, the Employees' Pension Scheme (EPS), rarely gets the same attention. That neglect may prove costly.

For eligible members, 8.33% of the employer's contribution is compulsorily diverted to EPS, subject to a wage ceiling. A pension becomes payable at age 58, after 10 years of contributory service is complete. Unlike EPF, however, EPS does not build a visible corpus and cannot be withdrawn as a lump sum. Its low visibility means most employees seldom scan their passbook for EPS entries, allowing errors to slip by that later may lead to serious consequences.

Faulty EPS records may lead to reduced pension benefits, denial of pension, or even complications in future EPF withdrawals or transfers. Since EPS data — covering salary details, service history, and monthly contributions — is maintained and updated by employers through the EPFO Employer Portal, the scope for mistakes is significant.

Common issues include over- or under-contribution due to incorrect salary inputs, skipped contributions for eligible employees, contributions made for ineligible employees, or errors in recording the date of joining. Even small discrepancies can distort your pensionable service record. If you spot inconsistencies, act quickly.

Kunal Kabra, founder and CEO of Kustodian.Life, says corrections can only be made after the financial year closes and accounts are settled. For instance, errors from March 2026 can typically be fixed by June. Mistakes in April filings, usually completed in early May, might not be rectifiable until June the following year.

Early detection is key. Make sure EPS deductions appear regularly in your passbook for all eligible months. In case of discrepancies, ask your employer to reconcile contributions with actual salary records. Note that you cannot directly approach the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation for corrections; employers must file a revised Electronic Challan-cum-Return (ECR) to initiate the process. The EPFO then verifies and approves the changes.

The latest EPFO guidelines outline how such errors are handled. If contributions are made for an ineligible employee, the amount, along with interest, is transferred from the EPS account to the EPF account, and the corresponding pension service record is deleted. Conversely, if an eligible employee is excluded, the employer must revise filings so that contributions, including interest, are shifted from EPF to EPS, and the missing service period is restored.

Another frequent problem is service record mismatch. Employment periods may be incorrectly mapped to your Universal Account Number (UAN), leading to gaps in pensionable service. In such cases, employers must rectify joining dates and submit a joint declaration. EPF members must also audit records with former employers. Ensure your total pensionable service reflects actual tenure, with no missing exit dates, overlaps or unexplained gaps. Flag discrepancies with the previous HR or payroll team for correction on the EPFO portal.

While most EPS issues can be resolved with employer support, delays are not uncommon. If your employer is unresponsive, escalate the matter through the EPFiGMS grievance portal. As a last resort, filing a Right to Information application with the regional EPFO office can help uncover the reason for inaction. Ignoring EPS errors is risky. What appears to be a minor administrative lapse today can snowball into denied claims or reduced retirement income tomorrow. A quick audit of your EPS records and timely corrective action, can prevent complex issues later.

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ASK THE EXPERTS

I am 45, salaried, and cover my parents (aged 68 and 64) under a separate family floater health insurance policy of Rs 10 lakh. Should I continue with the floater plan or switch to individual policies for each parent? — *S Nagaraj*

The choice between a floater and individual policies is less important than ensuring adequate and flexible coverage. A well-structured family floater is efficient. It's more cost-effective and allows you to opt for a higher common sum insured. If one parent needs hospitalisation in a year as well as a large cover, a floater with a high sum insured is better than having individual policies with lower limits. Parents do have different medical needs, but floater policies address these with features like day-one cover for select pre-existing conditions, no upper-age limits, no mandatory co-payments, and inclusive benefits. Individual policies may be relevant only in very specific medical scenarios. Otherwise, the focus should remain on choosing a high sum insured with minimal sub-limits and restrictions.

Sarbvir Singh
Joint group CEO, PB Fintech

Should I pause my SIP in view of the current geopolitical tensions and market volatility? —*Ram Verma*

Geopolitical tensions bring immense downside volatility in equity markets. This gives you a chance to invest at discounted levels, allowing you to accumulate more mutual fund units. This will help you to generate higher returns than the average when markets enter a bull run. Geopolitical tensions and downside volatility in equity markets have always been temporary and stabilise over the long run. Remember: "be greedy when the world is fearful" (based on your risk appetite and time horizon). Instead of pausing your SIP, think about increasing your SIP amount. Over the past 17-18 months, Indian equities have been quite volatile and have underperformed global peers. Valuations have become very reasonable offering very good margin of safety and future upside opportunity. This is a good time to be greedy if you have a further 3-to-5-year time horizon.

Rushabh Desai
Founder, Rupee With Rushabh Investment Services

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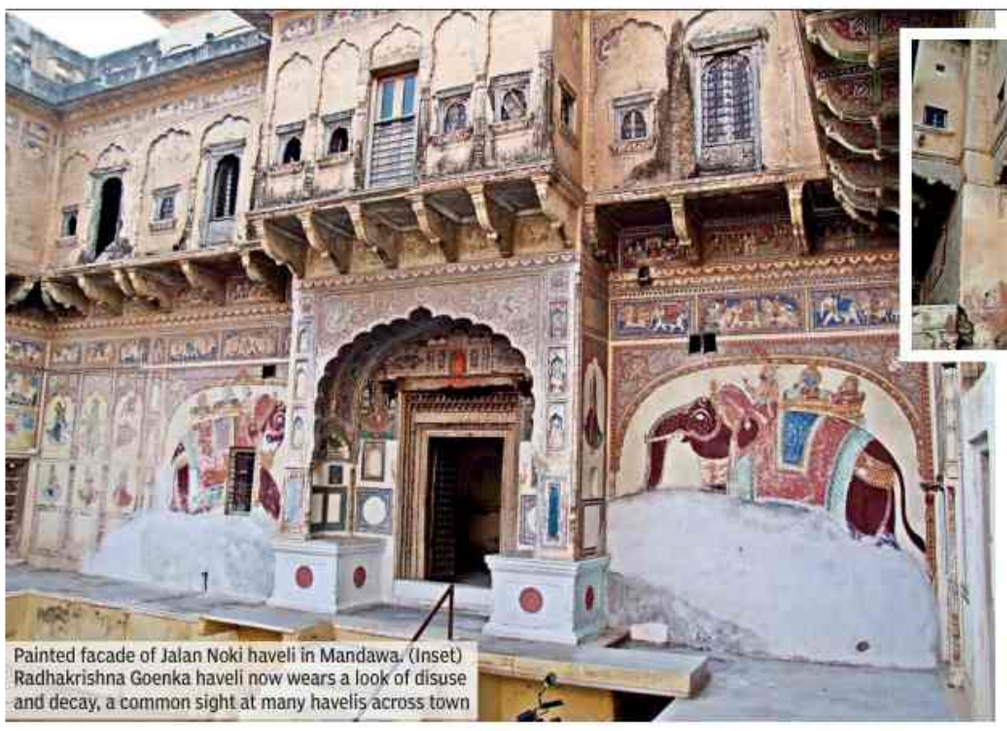

Painted facade of Jalan Noki haveli in Mandawa. (Inset) Radhakrishna Goenka haveli now wears a look of disuse and decay, a common sight at many havelis across town

Canvas of biz moguls

Shekhawati havelis go under the 'hammer'

Ancestral homes of Birlas, Khaitans and many more were built as living art galleries. Now empty and uncared for, they're a target for land mafia

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In the northeastern corner of Rajasthan lies Shekhawati, a region often eclipsed by Jaipur's palaces, Jodhpur's forts and Udaipur's lakes. Yet, its dusty towns contain one of India's most remarkable architectural landscapes. Known as the "world's largest open-air art gallery", Shekhawati's fresco-painted havelis were built by adventurous, wealthy Marwari merchant families. The Birlas, Poddars, Dalmias, Piramals, Rungtas, Khaitans all trace their roots here. Their homes were almost like public declarations of wealth, taste, piety, and modernity, rendered in lime plaster and pigment for the streets to see.

Silk Route To Raj Riches

Shekhawati's fortunes were once tied to the Silk Route. Caravans laden with silk and spices passed through its desert towns, drawn by lower transit duties compared to Jaipur and Bikaner. For some time, this made Shekhawati a prosperous trade corridor. When neighbouring territories reduced levies at the behest of the British administration, traffic shifted, the local economy weakened, and the merchants were forced to look outward. By the mid-19th century, these families had spread across India, especially Kolkata, thriving as bankers, traders and industrialists under the expanding British economy.

Aman Nath, who 'discovered' Shekhawati in the 1970s and restored unlisted buildings, while bringing global tourism spotlight to the region, says, "The Marwaris' rise in Calcutta was the result of strategic adaptation. They shifted from caravan trade in Shekhawati to commodity financiers and brokers in colonial Calcutta, thriving on Britain's demand for raw materials and the distribution of factory-made goods deep into the hinterland. By the late 19th century, they had accumulated immense wealth, even as Shekhawati itself declined."

Where Rajput rulers built forts to project power, the Marwaris of Shekhawati expressed their wealth through havelis, lavish mansions adorned with frescoes. Between 1860 and 1900, hundreds of these grand homes were constructed and painted, converging themes from myth, commerce and colonial modern life. Behind this explosion of art were the Chiteras, hereditary artisans drawn from Hindu Kumhars and Muslim communities.

"Fresco painting in India dates to the Ajanta Caves, around 1,400 years ago. Later, during Akbar's reign, Italian missionaries contributed to palace interiors," says Nath. He points out how, in the 16th century, Persian craftsmen introduced *arayish*, a lime-plaster technique polished with agate to create a marble-like finish. "In Shekhawati, wealthy traders funded elaborate frescoes on haveli facades and interiors, making such large-scale artistry possible," adds Nath.

Forts featured limited frescoes in pleasure rooms and temples, often depicting presiding deities. Many paintings, though executed in fresco buono (on wet plaster, making them durable), have faded over time. On the other hand, the mansions of the Seths or the merchants, across nearly 150 villages in Shekhawati, became canvases. One can still see Krishna leela alongside British sahibs in motorcars, trains steaming across arid landscapes, gramophones, women with parasols — visual biographies of Shekhawati's merchant elite, recording their rise from caravan traders to colonial intermediaries.

Grave Threat

Today, Shekhawati's frescoes face a different threat; not time, but bulldozers. As ownership passed through generations, the upkeep of the mansions suffered. Many havelis crumbled, others were deliberately destroyed by land mafia with an eye on converting them into shops and workshops.

Nath says most havelis are now owned by large joint families with hundreds of stakeholders, making collective decisions nearly impossible. Disputes and ownership complexities prevent restoration, and buyouts are rarely feasible, leaving many structures in decay and disrepair. Mandawa, once the fulcrum of Shekhawati tourism, has seen iconic havelis, like the Radhakrishna Goenka and Ram Avtar Jhalan ki, razed.

"These havelis are the backbone of Mandawa's tourism economy. If they vanish, so will the visitors," says Angad Mandawa of Castle Mandawa. In a town where tourism is tethered to its painted walls, every demolition is not just a cultural loss but an economic one, too, rippling through guides, hotels, drivers, craftspeople and shopkeepers.

Some families, like the Chokhanys, are rooted to their family heritage. The Chokhani Double Haveli, built 200 years ago, has been a pivot for foreign tourists. It is now recognised by Rajasthan Tourism as a must-see sight.

Arun Kumar Chokhani, a fourth-generation descendant of Seth Daulataram ji, explains why many others fell into disuse. "Successive generations remained busy with their businesses and ownership became scattered. That's how their interest in the havelis waned," he said.

The result is a sad story of locked courtyards, collapsing roofs, and flaking murals.

Uncertain Road Ahead

After intense lobbying by the heritage hotel industry, the Bhajan Lal Sharma-led BJP govt in Rajasthan has recently identified 615 havelis across Shekhawati as heritage assets. District collectors and local officials have been instructed to block property transfers, while a Rs 200 crore restoration fund has been announced in this year's state budget for conservation of these havelis.

Unlike forts carved from stone or palaces clad in marble, these painted walls are fragile canvases, susceptible to fading, peeling and human interference. Restoration is not simply construction work; it is conservation that requires stabilising plaster, matching pigments, preventing moisture, documenting what remains before it disappears.

Nath says, "Preservation will require more than money. Urgent documentation, careful restoration and sustainable tourism models are key to incentivising local communities to protect rather than sell off their heritage. Without a living economic reason to keep havelis standing, the pressure would be compelling to monetise land through demolition."

Ilay Cooper, who surveyed and photographed these havelis for decades, captures the predicament in his book, 'The Painted Havelis of Shekhawati': "Some young Marwaris in Calcutta or in Delhi have never been to the homeland. Some are uncertain of their town of origin. The family still holds a property there, but it is of little value. The share in a crumbling painted haveli has, with each generation, become smaller. The joint owners never agree what should be done with it."

> Without a living economic reason to keep havelis standing, the pressure would be compelling to monetise land through demolition
> —AMAN NATH | HERITAGE CONSERVATIONIST

This Maha village cooks without LPG or firewood

Abhijeet.Patil@timesofindia.com

The Faraktes' village home doesn't have an LPG cooktop. Neither does it have a wood-fired oven or induction cooktop. Amid conflict in West Asia, it is also free of panic over cooking gas supply that's evident across most of India. The source of their peace of mind sits in their own backyard, promising an uninterrupted supply of cooking fuel. But that is nothing surprising in their village in Maharashtra's Kolhapur district, where about a fifth of all dwellings have domestic biogas units.

For the last three years, Sanjay and Suvarna have done all their cooking and water heating on a stove that runs on biogas generated from manure, kitchen waste and even sewage in their backyard. The Faraktes have set up a three metric cube unit, sufficient for a family of five. The pipe that runs directly from the digester to their kitchen brings gas generated from manure and human waste.

Biogas is climate-friendly and doesn't harm the lungs like typical chulhas. After extraction, it leaves behind a rich fertiliser. "The supply is steady and clean. I don't cough or have breathing trouble from the smoke generated by its burning," Suvarna said.

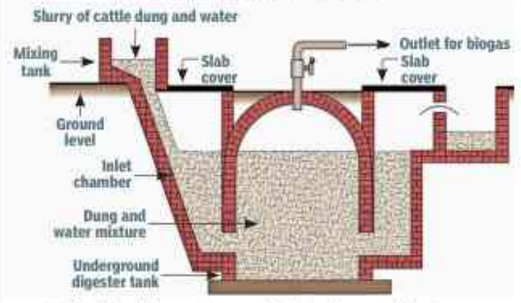
In Faraktewadi, her village of 1,100 residents in Kagal tehsil of Kolhapur district, nearly 200 households having biogas units. The story is repeated in 12 villages in Kolhapur district where all households have biogas units. Those who have the facility but did not use it are restoring it after realising that the heat of the West Asia war can singe them, too.

Villagers do point out that the efficiency of biogas units can be affected during monsoon as temperatures cool. That's because the decomposing bacteria in the biogas unit are more active when the temperature is high. But, even then, the gas generated is enough for cooking, though villagers store up on cowdung cakes as a backup.

Sanjay and Suvarna Farakte point to their fixed dome-type biogas unit set up through a central scheme

Abhijeet Patil

HOW A BIOGAS UNIT WORKS



- In the fixed-dome type unit, the dome collects methane, water vapour and carbon dioxide
- The digester is filled with dung and methane starts to form in 21 days. Within the next week or so the biogas unit is ready to use
- A biogas unit of three metric cubic size costs between Rs 35,000 and Rs 40,000 and lasts 20 years

Nearly 1.24 lakh units have been set up in Kolhapur through centrally sponsored schemes since 1982, first as part of former PM Indira Gandhi's 20-point programme and, now, under the Modi govt's National Biogas and Organic Manure Programme. In fact, Kolhapur alone accounts for nearly 20% of the installation target for Maharashtra's 34 districts under the new programme.

The impetus has also come from the Centre's subsidy of Rs 14,350 per biogas unit after it is ready. Kolhapur Zilla Parishad (ZP) offers Rs 5,000 per unit to cover cement, brick and labour costs. But fewer biogas units were set up last year as the targets were achieved in the first four years and the Rs 100 crore grant dried up. ZP authorities are waiting for phase-2, and want Centre to increase the subsidy amount, which has remained stagnant since 2021. They also want the funds released before every March.

"No family will set up biogas units without financial assistance. The subsidy is what they want. In recent years, Centre has not released its share. Only if the subsidy is released on time, and is hiked, will more rural households set up biogas units," a ZP official said.

TRANSMISSION CORPORATION OF ANDHRA PRADESH LIMITED
(A Government of Andhra Pradesh Undertaking & An ISO 27001-2022 Certified Company)

TENDER NOTICE

The APTRANSCO invites on-line bids for Spec No.PMM23-e-17/2026 for "for supply of 45Nos 50MVA 132/33kV PTRs in 3 Lots (ie., Lot-1: 15Nos., Lot-2- 15 Nos. and Lot-3: 15Nos.) for utilization in Augmentation & Construction works at various substations of APTRANSCO. Date and time of availability of tender : **28.04.2026 by 17:00 Hrs.** Further details can be seen in website(s): **www.apeprocurement.gov.in** For further details Contact No: 9491030732
RO No: GMCC/APTRANSCO/21/26-27 Sd/- CHIEF ENGINEER/ TRANSMISSION

BANGALORE ELECTRICITY SUPPLY COMPANY LIMITED
(Wholly Owned Government of Karnataka Undertaking)

BRIEF TENDER NOTIFICATION (Call-2)
(Through KPP Portal Only)

BESCOM invites tender through Karnataka Public Procurement Portal for following materials.

Sl. No.	Description	Enquiry No.
1	Procurement of 9 Mtr 300 KG PSCC Poles Lot-1	BESCOM/2025-26/IND0212/Call-2
2	Procurement of 9 Mtr 300 KG PSCC Poles Lot-2	BESCOM/2025-26/IND0213/Call-2

Bid Documents available from : **28.04.2026 onwards,** Last date for Bid Submission : **13.05.2026, 17:00 Hrs.** Opening of Bid Document : **14.05.2026 at 17:15 Hrs.**

The Tender can be obtained through Karnataka Public Procurement Portal web-site **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in** Aspiring Bidders need to register on Karnataka Public Procurement Portal. Further Bidders can take assistance with Karnataka Public Procurement Portal help desk contact numbers (+91-8046010000 +91-8068948777, 09240214000 & 09240214001) or email at **support@eprochelpdesk.com**

Sd/-
Chief General Manager (Elec), Procurement, BESCOM, 4th Floor, K.R. Circle, Bengaluru-560 001

For Electricity Related Complaints Call: 1912
Download BESCOM MITHRA Mobile App.

KONKAN RAILWAY CORPORATION LIMITED
(A Government of India Undertaking)

OPEN E-TENDER (TWO PACKET SYSTEM) INVITATION NOTICE.

Name of Work: Supply, installation, testing, commissioning of ground mounted ON GRID, 5 Mwp Solar Power plant with the objective of generating and supplying solar energy to TSS at 25 kV, single phase, 50Hz along with required protection system through Public Private Partnership (PPP) on DBFOT (Design, Build,Finance, Operate and Transfer) basis for 25 years at Murdeshwar of Konkan Railway in the state of Karnataka. **Notice No: KR/CO/EL/SPMRDW/T/4A/2026 Date: 28/04/2026. Contract Period:** 25 Years. **Estimated Project Cost:** PPP Model on DBFOT basis. **EMD :** ₹16,50,000/-. **Last Date & time for Online Submission Of Tender :** 28/05/2026 up to 15.00 Hrs. **Opening of Tender :** On 28/05/2026 at 15.30 Hrs. Amendments / Corrigendum if any, would be uploaded on IREPS website only. **Submission of Tender Documents :** Through IREPS. Manual Tender Documents shall not be accepted.

K RIDE
RAIL INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT COMPANY (KARNATAKA) LIMITED
(A Joint Venture of Govt. of Karnataka & Ministry of Railways)
BENGALURU SUBURBAN RAIL PROJECT
Website: www.kride.in Email ID: gmprocurement@kride.in

e-TENDER NOTICE

Tender Notice No.: K-RIDE/DL/EL/YPR-HSRA/LIFT/2026 Date: 24.04.2026. Tender ID: 2026_KRIDE_275753_1.

"Design, Manufacture, supply, testing and commissioning of 2 Nos - Service-cum-passenger lift of 2 Tonne capacity at Yesvantpur Parcel office, 6 Nos- 20 passenger lift Machine room less at Hebbal, Banaswadi and Anekal Road Railway Stations."

Last date for submission of bids is **25.05.2026 IST 15:00 Hrs.** For details visit **https://etenders.gov.in/eprocure/app**

DIPR/CP/YC/376/2026-27 Sd/- GENERAL MANAGER /Procurement/KRIDE
KridePrm Kride Bsrp kride_bsrp KRIDE,BSRP

BENGALURU SOUTH CITY CORPORATION
Office of the Executive Engineer,
Traffic Engineering and Mobility Cell, 2nd Floor,
9th Main Road, Jayanagara South 2nd Block,
Bengaluru-560 011.

No:EE/BSCC/TE@Mcell/TEND/03/2026-27 Date: 27.04.2026

INVITATION FOR TENDER (IFT)
(Through GOK KPPP only)
website: https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in

The Executive Engineer, Traffic Engineering and Mobility Cell BSCC, Bengaluru invites tenders from eligible Tenderers for the works detailed in the table below.

Sl. No.	Name of the Work
1.	Providing Scientific Humps, HRPC, Lane dividers, Thermo Plastic Paint and other Road Safety Works in Arterial and Sub Arterial Roads in South and Bommanahalli Zone. **Appx. Amount put to tender: (₹ in Lakhs) 252.09 (Exclusive of GST), EMD Amount in ₹: 3,80,000/-.**

Calendar of Events: (1) Availability of Tender document in KPP Portal : **28.04.2026, (2)** Date and Time for pre-bid meeting: **05.05.2026 at 11:00 a.m. (3)** Last Date & Time for Queries (Only through online) : **05.05.2026 at 4:00 p.m. (4)** Last Date &Time for receipt of Tenders : **11.05.2026 upto 4:00 p.m. (5)** Opening of Technical bids : **13.05.2026 at 4:30 p.m. (6)** Opening of Financial bid (if possible) : **14.02.2026 at 11:30 p.m.**

Sd/- Executive Engineer, Traffic Engineering and Mobility Cell, BSCC.

ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಸರ್ಕಾರ
ಪಂಚಾಯತ ರಾಜ್ ಇಂಜಿನೀಯರಿಂಗ್ ವಿಭಾಗ, ಶಿರಸಿ, ಉತ್ತರ ಕನ್ನಡ
ದೂರವಾಣಿ: 08384-226381 ಇ-ಮೇಲ್: ee_zpedsirsi@yahoo.co.in
ಕ್ರಸಂ: ಪಂ.ರಾ.ಇಂ/ವಿಬಿ/ಟಿಬಿ-1/CMIDPಟೆಂಡರ್-02/2026-27/101 ದಿನಾಂಕ: 23-04-2026

ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆ 02/2026-27 (ಇ-ಪ್ರೊಕ್ಯೂರ್‌ಮೆಂಟ್ ಮೂಲಕ)

ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ರಾಜ್ಯಪಾಲರ ಪರವಾಗಿ ಕಾರ್ಯನಿರ್ವಾಹಕ ಅಭಿಯಂತರರು, ಪಂಚಾಯತ್ ರಾಜ್ ಇಂಜಿನೀಯರಿಂಗ್ ವಿಭಾಗ, ಶಿರಸಿ ಇವರಿಂದ ಲೋಕೋಪಯೋಗಿ ಇಲಾಖೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ನವಿಕೃತ ನೊಂದಾಯಿತ 2019-20 ನೇ ಸಾಲಿನ ನವಿಕೃತ ನೋಂದಾಯಿಸಿದ ಅರ್ಹ ಹಾಗೂ ಇ-ಪ್ರೊಕ್ಯೂರ್‌ಮೆಂಟ್ ಸಂಸ್ಥೆಯಿಂದ ನೋಂದಾಯಿಸಲ್ಪಟ್ಟ ಗುತ್ತಿಗೆದಾರರಿಂದ CMIDP ಯೋಜನೆಯಡಿ ಕಾಮಗಾರಿಗಳಿಗೆ ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಸರ್ಕಾರದ ಸಾರ್ವಜನಿಕ ಖರೀದಿ ಪಾರದರ್ಶಕತೆ ಕಾನೂನು ಹಾಗೂ ನಿಯಮಾವಳಿ 2000 ಹಾಗೂ Standard Tender Document ನಂತೆ KW-III ತತ್ವಂಬಂಧ ಕಾಲಕಾಲಕ್ಕೆ ಹೊರಡಿಸಲಾದ ತಿದ್ದುಪಡಿ ಆದೇಶಗಳನ್ವಯ ನಿಬಂಧನೆಗೆ ಒಳಪಟ್ಟು ಈ ಕೆಳಗಿನಂತೆ ಐಟಂವಾರು ಟೆಂಡರ ಕರೆಯಲಾಗಿದೆ. ಅರ್ಹ ಗುತ್ತಿಗೆದಾರರು ಇ-ಆಡಳಿತ ಕೇಂದ್ರ ಅಥವಾ ವೆಬ್‌ಸೈಟ್ http://www.kppp.karnataka.gov.in ನಲ್ಲಿ ಪ್ರಕಟಿಸಿದಂತೆ ದಿನಾಂಕ ಹಾಗೂ ಇನ್ನುಳಿದ ವಿವರಗಳನ್ನು ಖಚಿತಪಡಿಸಿಕೊಂಡು ಟೆಂಡರಿಗಾಗಿ ಭಾಗವಹಿಸಬಹುದು. ಹೆಚ್ಚಿನ ವಿವರಗಳಿಗೆ ಈ ಕಚೇರಿಯಿಂದ ಕಚೇರಿ ವೇಳೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಮಾಹಿತಿ ಪಡೆಯಬಹುದು ಟೆಂಡರ್ ವಿವರಗಳು ಈ ಕೆಳಗಿನಂತಿವೆ.

ಕಾಮಗಾರಿ ಹೆಸರು: Others Category: RDPR/2026-27/BR/WORK_INDENT25942, ಟೆಂಡರಿಗಿಟ್ಟ ಮೊತ್ತ ರೂ. 63.31 ಲಕ್ಷ

(1) ಭರ್ತಿ ಮಾಡಿದ ಟೆಂಡರ್‌ಗಳನ್ನು ಸ್ವೀಕರಿಸುವ ಕೊನೆಯ ದಿನಾಂಕ: 14-05-2026 ರ ಸಂಜೆ 16.00 ಘಂಟೆವರೆಗೆ (2) ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಶೆಡ್ಯೂಲ್-ಬಿ ಗಳ Technical Bid ಗಳನ್ನು ತೆರೆಯುವ ದಿನಾಂಕ: 16-05-2026 ಬೆಳಿಗ್ಗೆ 11.30 ಘಂಟೆಗೆ (ಸಾಧ್ಯವಾದಲ್ಲಿ) ಹೆಚ್ಚಿನ ವಿವರಗಳನ್ನು www.kppp.karnataka.gov.in ವೆಬ್‌ಸೈಟಿನಲ್ಲಿ ಅಥವಾ ಈ ಕಚೇರಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಪಡೆಯಬಹುದಾಗಿದೆ. (3) ಕಾಮಗಾರಿಗೆ Financial Bid ಗಳನ್ನು ತೆರೆಯುವ ದಿನಾಂಕ: 18-05-2026 ಸಂಜೆ 16.30 ಘಂಟೆಗೆ (ಸಾಧ್ಯವಾದಲ್ಲಿ)

ಸಹಿ/- ಕಾರ್ಯನಿರ್ವಾಹಕ ಇಂಜಿನೀಯರು,
ಪಂಚಾಯತ ರಾಜ್ ಇಂಜಿನೀಯರಿಂಗ್ ವಿಭಾಗ, ಶಿರಸಿ
DIPR/KWR/KSMCA/81/26-27 dt.27.04.2026

BRIDCUL (ब्रिडकुल)
टैलीफैक्स-0135-2522941 ई-मेल: bridcul@gmail.com CIN No. U45203UR2006SGC032991
ब्रिज, रोपवे, टनल एण्ड अदर इन्फ्रास्ट्रक्चर डेवलपमेंट कॉरपोरेशन ऑफ उत्तराखण्ड लिमिटेड
(उत्तराखण्ड सरकार का उपक्रम) पूर्व में उत्तराखण्ड राज्य अवस्थापना विकास निगम लिमिटेड
प्रधान कार्यालय – अवस्थापना भवन, 583–ज, राजकीय आई0टी0आई0 निरंजनपुर के सामने, माजरा, सहारनपुर रोड, देहरादून–248001

Ref No: 697/BRIDCUL/969 (Elect) /26 Dated: 27/04/2026

E-Tendering

On behalf of Hon'ble, Governor of Uttarakhand, E-Tenders are invited by Managing Director BRIDCUL, for the below work at Sr.no. 1 from the Contractors registered with any Govt./Semi Govt./PSU/Nigam in suitable Class & Category and for work at Sr. no. 2 & 3 from the Contractors registered with BRIDCUL only in Category-III (Upto 2 Cr.) for the work given as below:-

S. No.	Ref No.	Name of Project	Estimated cost (In Lac Including GST)	Earnest Money (In Lac)	Cost of Tender Document (In Rs.)	Time Period
1	BRIDCUL/HQ HLD/03/2026-27)	External Electrification & Allied works for Working Women Hostel at Fulsungi & Transit Camp, Rudrapur.	735.10	14.70	5000 + 18% GST	18 Month
2	BRIDCUL/HQ DDN/04/2026 -27	Electrification & Allied works of Boys Hostel at Government Polytechnic in Quansi in Distt. Dehradun	55.54	1.11	5000 + 18% GST	12 Month
2	BRIDCUL/HQ DDN/05/2026 -27	Electrification, Fire fighting & allied work in Proposed Warehouse & Infrastructure Development at Shivpuri and Neem Beach under ICONIC City Project (Phase-II)	175.96	3.52	5000 + 18% GST	18 Month

For above tenders, document download start date **29.04.2026** and Bid submission end **date is 13.05.2026 at 1500 Hrs.** The details of e-tender of above works can be obtained directly from website **https://uktenders.gov.in**

Changes, if any will be intimated only through website **https://uktenders.gov.in** DGM (HQ)

1001/24/2627
ODISHA STATE SEEDS CORPORATION LTD.
(A GOVERNMENT UNDERTAKING)
SANTARAPUR, BHUBANESWAR-751002.
Tel-MD 0674-2340573, E Mail- mdosscltd456@gmail.com

Short e-Tender Call Notice for Procurement of Certified Onion Seed for Kharif-2026
NIT No. OSSC/ Mktg (Hort)-08/2026

Interested bidders may visit the e-tender portal i.e. **www.tendersodisha.gov.in** for downloading the document for Procurement of Certified Onion Seed for Kharif-2026.
Last date of receipt of tender in portal -**04.05.2026 up-to 11.00AM.**

Sd/-
Managing Director OSSC Ltd.
OIPR-1001/1045/1/26-27/0005

1001/25/2627
ODISHA STATE SEEDS CORPORATION LTD.
(A GOVERNMENT UNDERTAKING)
SANTARAPUR, BHUBANESWAR-751002.
Tel-MD 0674-2340573,
E Mail- mdosscltd456@gmail.com

Short e-Tender Call Notice for Procurement of Certified Seed Potato for Kharif-2026
NIT NO. OSSC/ Mktg (Hort)-07/2026

Interested bidders may visit the e-tender portal i.e. **www.tendersodisha.gov.in** for downloading the document for Procurement of Certified Seed Potato for Kharif-2026.
Last date of receipt of tender in portal -**04.05.2026 up-to 11.00 AM.**

Sd/-
Managing Director, OSSC Ltd.
OIPR-1001/1045/1/26-27/0006

13001/310/2627
BHUBANESWAR DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
AKASH SHOVA BUILDING, SACHIVALAYA MARG, BHUBANESWAR - 751001
PABX No.0674-2392801 / 0998/6437, FAX No.0674-2390633 / 085
Visit us at: http://www.bda.gov.in/

Invitation for Bids

Bid Identification No. 291/EM/BDA/2026-27 **Date. 24/04/2026**

Engineer Member, BDA on behalf of Bhubaneswar Development Authority, Bhubaneswar invites percentage rate bids in double cover system in ONLINE MODE from eligible contractors for civil works as mentioned below:

1.	Nature of works	:	Civil, Horticulture and Electrical Work (Improvement and beautification of Baagchi Cancer Hospital Road from ch.0/000 to 2/904 km Under Bhubaneswar Development Authority (BDA).
2.	Total No. of works	:	01 (one) No.
3.	Amount put to tender	:	Rs. 15.18 Crore
4.	Class of Contractor	:	'A' & 'Special' class
5.	Period of Completion	:	11 (Eleven) Calendar months
6.	Cost of Bid Documents	:	Rs. 10000.00 + 18% GST Rs.11800.00 (**Online transfer by the last date & time for receipt of bids**)
7.	Earnest Money Deposit (EMD)	:	1% of estimated cost put to tender. (**Online transfer by the last date & time for receipt of bids**)
8.	Availability of Tender	:	**From 27.04.2026 to 5.30 PM of 11.05.2026 https://tendersodisha.gov.in.**
9.	Date of opening of Tender	:	**Dt. 12.05.2026 at 11.30 AM**
10.	Place of opening of Tender	:	O/o Engineer Member, BDA, Bhubaneswar.

Further details can be seen from the website: **https://tendersodisha.gov.in.** Any addendum corrigendum cancellation of tender can also be seen in the said website.

Sd/-
Engineer Member, BDA, Bhubaneswar
OIPR-13001/13033/1/26-27/0015

34001/125/2627
WORKS DEPARTMENT
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER, EASTERN CIRCLE (R&B), BALASORE
e-mail : seec_bls@rediffmail.com
Government of Odisha "e" Procurement Notice
Bid Identification No. CCEEC - 03/2026-27
No: 3269 Dt: 23.04.2026

Nature of work	:	**Road Work.**
Number of works	:	**1 No Road.**
Amount put to Tender	:	**Rs. 259.79 lakh**
Class of Contractor	:	**"B" & "A" Class.**

Date & Time of availability of bid document in the portal : **Dt. 30.04.2026 at 10:00 AM**
Last Date/Time of receipt of bid in the portal : **Dt. 14.05.2026 up to 05:00 PM**
Date of opening of bid : **Dt. 15.05.2026 at 11:00 AM**
Name & address of the Office inviting bid : **Chief Construction Engineer, Eastern Circle (R&B), Balasore.**

The bidders have to participate in **ONLINE** bidding only. Further details can be seen from the e-Procurement portal "**http//tendersodisha.gov.in.**" All future corrigendum will be available on ONLINE mode only.

Sd/-
Chief Construction Engineer, Eastern Circle (R&B) Balasore
OIPR-34001/34026/1/26-27/0004

TIMES BUSINESS

THE TIMES OF INDIA, BENGALURU | TUESDAY, APRIL 28, 2026

China Holds Most Strategic Oil Inventories

At 1,397 million barrels, China held more strategic oil reserves in 2025 than the next 8 countries put together. Dragon's total inventories comprised of commercial (1,038 million barrels, mostly held by national oil cos) and govt-held reserves (359 million barrels). US, at 413 million barrels, is a distant second, followed by Japan

Estimated strategic crude inventories in select countries as of Dec, 2025
(In million barrels)

India had an additional 3 million barrels of crude stored at its Mangalore site for the Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC) that is not considered part of India's strategic reserve

India has been exploring the possibility of adding storage outside of the country for its own oil. It held discussions with Oman about leasing space to store 5 million barrels last year

Source: US Energy Information Administration

Acko kicks off IPO process; targets up to $2.5bn valuation

Asmita.Dey@timesofindia.com

Mumbai: General Atlantic and Accel-backed new-age insurer Acko has kicked off its IPO process, roping in Morgan Stanley, ICICI Securities and Kotak Securities as bankers for the issue expected to hit Dalal Street in early 2027, said people in the know. The company, which is planning to make a confidential filing sometime in the second half of the year, is targeting an IPO valuation of $2-2.5 billion, higher than its last valuation of about $1.4 billion, they said.

After a stellar run last year, India's IPO market has lost steam as the US-Iran war triggered sharp volatility in stock markets, spooking investors and nudging companies to reassess their IPO timelines. Walmart's PhonePe, for instance, paused its $1.3 billion IPO while some companies are also looking at secondaries to give exit to investors, industry executives said.

Acko's IPO will be a mix of fresh issue of shares and an offer for sale (OFS). The company turned unicorn in 2021 after it raised $255 million from investors at a valuation of $1.1 billion.

Vembu urges Indians in US to come back

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: Zoho founder Sridhar Vembu has urged Indians living in the US to consider returning home, arguing that their global standing will increasingly depend on India's own economic and technological strength. In an "open letter to Indians in America" posted on X, Vembu said that while the diaspora has achieved notable success, perceptions in the US are shifting, with some Americans believing immigrants are taking away jobs. He added that political outcomes in the US may not significantly alter these attitudes, describing the current landscape as a contest between ideological extremes in which immigrants are "bystanders." Instead, Vembu argued that long-term respect for Indians globally would be shaped more by India's prosperity, security and technological capabilities than by diaspora success alone.

Sun Pharma buys Organon of US in $12bn all-cash deal

Biggest Ever Overseas Buyout By An Indian Pharma Co

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: In its boldest move yet, Sun Pharma, India's largest pharma company, has struck the biggest-ever overseas pharma deal, acquiring US-listed Organon & Co for $11.8 billion (Rs 98,000 crore) in an all-cash transaction.

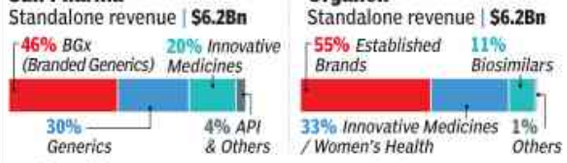
The deal broadens Sun Pharma's therapeutic breadth and geographic reach in one sweep, adding over 140 high-growth markets including China, and a portfolio around innovative therapies, including women's health, biosimilars, and legacy brands. Sun Pharma will pay $14 per share, a premium of over 24% to Organon's last closing price on April 24 in one of the largest M&A deals by an Indian company. On Monday, Sun Pharma shares closed 7% higher at Rs 1,734 on BSE.

Once completed, the acquisition will double Sun Pharma's revenue to $12.4 billion and its EBITDA to $3.7 billion, ranking it among the top 25 global pharmaceutical companies. Organon, spun off in 2021 from Merck (known as MSD outside US and Canada), brings a portfolio of over 70 products across women's health, general medicines and biosimilars, along with six manufacturing facilities worldwide.

Sun chairman Dilip Shanghvi said: "We are debt-averse, but we are never risk-averse. Biosimilars is a segment where building capabilities organically would take years; Organon gives us that platform immediately." Significantly, the deal positions Sun Pharma as the top 3 player in women's health, after German firms Merck and Bayer, and the seventh-largest biosimilars company in the world – two of the fastest-growing segments. "Sun Pharmaceutical's proposed deal with Organon, valued around 6x EBITDA, appears financially disciplined, supported by steady cash flows and a deleveraging path from 2.3x to potentially debt-free in three to four years. The key concern is that Organon is a low-growth asset, which could weigh on Sun's growth profile and has led to some shareholder uncertainty, especially given the MNC's huge existing debt," Vishal Manchanda analyst at Systematix said.

Indian Co Now 3rd Largest In Women's Health

Company	Target/Asset	Deal Size	Year
Sun Pharma	**Organon**	**$11.8bn**	**2026**
Biocon Biologics	Viatris biosimilars	$3.3bn	2022
Lupin	Gavis Pharma (US)	$880mn	2015
Intas	Actavis UK	$767mn	2015
Sun Pharma	Concert Pharma	$576mn	2023



Sun financials as per FY25; Organon as per CY25 (USD)

- Sun Pharma becomes 3rd largest player in women's health, after German firms Merck and Bayer and seventh-largest biosimilars company in the world
- The deal adds over 140 high-growth markets for Sun Pharma, including China

Set aside funds for likely defaults: RBI tells banks

New Rules To Apply From April 2027, Full Execution On Existing Loans By March 2030

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Mumbai: Banks will have to start setting aside money for possible loan defaults in advance from April 2027, using mathematical models to predict losses instead of waiting for borrowers to actually miss payments, under RBI's final rules issued on April 27, 2026. These norms soften some earlier proposals but still mark a major shift in how bad loans are recognised.

The new system moves banks away from the current practice of recognising losses only after a default happens, to a forward-looking approach called 'expected credit loss', where risks are estimated earlier. While the norms are stricter than what banks follow today, they are less harsh than the draft rules proposed in Oct 2025, reflecting a more balanced approach by the regulator.

The scope of the rules has also been widened. Earlier, the draft mainly applied to large commercial banks, excluding smaller players like small finance banks. The final guidelines now include small finance banks within the framework, although payments banks, local area banks and regional rural banks are still kept out.

RBI has also tweaked key assumptions that banks use when they cannot estimate risks precisely. The minimum default risk that banks must assume has been slightly lowered. At the same time, loans backed by strong collateral such as cash, gold and govt securities will now be treated more favourably, meaning banks will need to set aside less money against such loans than earlier proposed.

On implementation, banks will start following the new system from April 1, 2027, but will get time until March 31, 2030 to fully shift their existing loans to the new interest calculation method. At the time of transition, banks will also need to reassess the value of all their loans, with any impact adjusted directly in their reserves instead of affecting their profit and loss accounts.

"One-time impact could be around 5-10% for PSU banks' net-worth, and RBI has allowed to take it through reserves with a 4-year amortisation period. For private sector banks, impact will be very small and possibly contingent provisions can be used for set-off. Banks in general are very well capitalised with system CET1 at 13%+ and hence they can easily absorb the transition hit," said Suresh Ganapathy, an analyst with Macquarie Group.

If a borrower who had defaulted becomes regular again and shows no signs of stress, banks can now move the account directly back to a standard category. The earlier proposal that required a waiting period before such upgrades has been removed. For credit lines like overdrafts or credit cards, the rules now say that if the borrower exceeds limits for 60 days, it may now be treated as a sign of rising risk.

The final norms also classify loans more clearly to avoid mixing low-risk and high-risk assets. There will also be tighter oversight of the models banks will use to predict losses. Banks will now have to maintain a detailed list of these models, classify them based on importance, and ensure checks at three levels: businesses, risk managers and internal auditors.

GREATER READINESS, MORE CHECKS

- The expected credit loss (ECL) norms **now include small finance banks (excluding payments, regional rural, and local area banks)** in addition to large commercial banks
- Final norms are less stringent than the Oct 2025 draft, with **lower minimum default assumptions** and relief for strong collateralised loans
- One-time reassessment of all loans at transition, with **gains/losses adjusted directly in reserves,** not profit and loss
- Tighter oversight of loss-prediction models, clearer loan segments (gold, state-backed loans), loan a/c upgradation on improvement; **1% provisioning on unsecured retail loans unchanged**

Banks to report all related party forex derivative transactions: RBI

Mumbai: RBI has required banks to report all foreign exchange derivative deals involving the rupee undertaken in India and globally by their entire group, including overseas branches, subsidiaries, and parent entities. This brings into view offshore trades that were earlier largely invisible. This applies to both OTC deliverable and offshore non-deliverable contracts, meaning even speculative offshore bets on the rupee must now be disclosed. Banks now must report detailed transaction data—size, counterparty, maturity, and structure—no later than two working days, though trades below $1 million and certain already-reported or internal hedging transactions are exempt. TNN

Infy slides out of top 10 valued cos in India; TCS 6th now

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Mumbai: IT giant Infosys slipped out of the 10 most valued firms in India on Monday. On the other hand, TCS, which was the second most valued company in the country till a few years ago, is now the sixth-most valued company.

All these changes are taking place mainly due to recent AI-led disruptions that are challenging business models of India's software exporting majors.

On Monday, Infosys closed the session with its market capitalisation at a little over Rs 4.7 lakh crore, the 11th most valued company in India, behind LIC with a market cap of Rs 5.2 lakh crore. TCS's market cap stood at Rs 8.9 lakh crore, BSE data showed. In Monday's market, while IT stocks witnessed sharp sell-offs, helped by strong buying in Reliance Industries, Sun Pharma and HDFC Bank, the sensex closed 639 points up at 77,304 points. The rise in sensex came despite crude prices rallying to over $101/barrel mark and rupee languishing below the 94/$ mark.

In boost to IPO, NSE shareholders to divest over 4%

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Mumbai: The initial public offer for NSE, the largest stock exchange in India by trading turnover and revenue, got a boost on Monday as the required number of the bourse's shareholders agreed to part with their holdings for the offer for sale (OFS) to move forward.

Monday was the last day for NSE's existing shareholders to agree to divest their holdings through the IPO. Although final figures were still being collated late on Monday, sources said the aggregate offering of shares had crossed the 4% limit of NSE's total equity capital. Both PSU and private shareholders agreed to participate in the OFS, they said. NSE is in the process of finalising its offer document for the IPO that could be worth an estimated Rs 23,000 crore. Life insurance major LIC and banking giant SBI and its arms, are the major shareholders of NSE, together holding a little over 18% in the exchange. As of March 31, NSE had over 2 lakh shareholders, together holding 247.5 crore shares.

Amazon to take Q-comm to 100 cities

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Mumbai: Amazon is betting big on its quick commerce business, with plans afoot to take the instant delivery service to 100 cities from three locations now as it plays catch-up with rivals Blinkit, Swiggy Instamart and Zepto which together hold the bulk of the market share having forayed into the space well before quick deliveries became the default shopping mode for a lot of consumers. Amazon Now so far delivered only in Mumbai, Delhi-NCR and Bengaluru.

The development comes barely days after the Seattle-based e-commerce firm made a fresh $300 million bet on India as part of its target of deploying over $35 billion in the country by 2030.

In a statement on Monday, Amazon said its quick commerce service will expand to a clutch of smaller cities including Jaipur, Lucknow, Kanpur and Meerut alongside metros Chennai, Kolkata and Hyderabad.

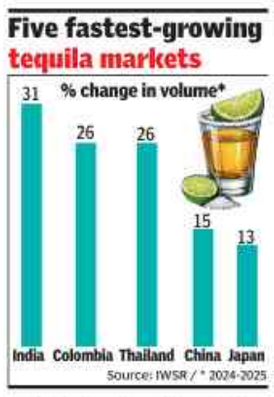
"The density of Amazon's store network is not comparable to that of Blinkit. Amazon's first priority will be to get all its Prime customers to shop from its quick commerce service Now. For that, they have to ramp up their operations. Also, assortment will be a big focus for them," said Satish Meena, founder at Datum Intelligence.

Agave spirits carve niche alongside tequila in India

▶ Continued from page 1

While whisky dominates the spirits market with 60% share, younger drinkers see tequila as more than a party shot. Locally produced agave spirits are carving out a market. While tequila is made from agave, agave spirits are a broader category. "The data validates what we have been observing for a few years," said Rakshay Dhariwal, founder of Maya Pistola Agavepura. "Cocktail culture in India has matured very quickly, and agave sits at the centre of that." He added that while consumption remains largely cocktail-led, there is a "noticeable growth in considered sipping", particularly for aged expressions.

Five fastest-growing tequila markets



Dhariwal said Indian agave spirits are not positioned as substitutes for tequila, but as a parallel category shaped by different origins and production methods. "Tequila has done the foundational work of educating consumers about agave... The opportunity is to sit alongside tequila, not to fight for the same position," he said. Unlike tequila, which can only be produced in designated regions of Mexico, Indian players are working with agave cultivated in the Deccan Plateau.

D'Yavol Spirits, an alcohol brand launched by actor Shah Rukh Khan, his son Aryan Khan and Zerodha founder Nikhil Kamath in partnership with Radico Khaitan, is preparing to launch an Añejo tequila priced between Rs 20,000 and Rs 30,000. "Our entry into tequila is driven by both premiumisation and long-term category potential," said Leti Blagoeva, CEO of D'Yavol Spirits.

Index for services, like IIP, in offing

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: After years of discussion, India's official statistical machinery is set to compile an index of service production (ISP), which will complement the existing index of industrial production (IIP) and help improve the assessment of short-term performance of the economy.

Besides, the index will be useful for augmenting the list of indicators used for compilation of quarterly estimates, first and second advance estimates and the provisional estimates of the country's national accounts.

The National Statistical Office (NSO) Monday released a consultation paper delineating methodology that will be used to prepare the new index. The paper is open for stakeholder comments until May 5.

The draft proposes to exclude services provided by the informal sector, which accounts for nearly 33% of the total services GVA, due to paucity of data from the data sources under consideration. It also proposes a temporary exclusion of health and education sector, which accounts for 10% of the services GVA.

India-NZ FTA: Farm goods, dairy outside treaty's ambit

▶ Continued from page 1

He also appeared confident of the deal going through despite his govt's coalition partner New Zealand First's concerns, as the opposition New Zealand Labour Party has backed it.

"We have a majority in Parliament to pass this agreement. All trade agreements that have been presented to Parliament have enjoyed super majority of the two largest parties... we have had bipartisanship," McClay said amid concerns expressed.

The deal was finalised within nine months of negotiations restarting, and India has managed to keep its sensitive farm products and dairy outside the ambit of the treaty. "The FTA catalyses new opportunities for our farmers, artisans, youth entrepreneurs, women and MSMEs, unlocking pathways for global market access and enterprise across sectors, from agriculture and manufacturing to technology, education and services," PM Narendra Modi said.

Commerce and industry minister Piyush Goyal said this is India's ninth agreement in the past few years, with the UK and Oman deals to be operationalised in the coming weeks, even as the trade pact with EU is awaiting approval.

"At the heart of the agreement is the empowerment for exports, agricultural productivity, student mobility, skills, investment and services," he said.

Goyal said that India can hope to garner a bigger share across product segments from footwear to automobiles. The trade agreement, for which negotiations were concluded in Dec, will provide duty-free access for India's exports including textiles, apparel, leather, footwear, gems and jewellery, engineering goods, and processed foods. New Zealand has peak tariffs of up to 10% in segments such as ceramics, carpets, automobiles, and auto components.

On its part, India will lower tariff on 70% tariff lines, covering 95% of bilateral trade value, while keeping nearly 30% of the products outside the purview of the pact.

While the treaty opens the doors for Indian professionals, Goyal said he has also invited GCCs from other New Zealand to take advantage of the skilled manpower in the country and lower their costs. India has offered concessions in sectors such as banking through permission to let New Zealand open more branches here.

McClay said that New Zealand companies intend to use the provisions of the treaty to import goods to India and re-export after value addition. Goyal clarified that some of these goods, which may be related to agriculture or dairy, will not be allowed to be sold in the domestic market and can only be used for export, in line with India's foreign trade policy.

CERT-In warns MSMEs on new AI risks

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: India's cybersecurity agency, the Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In) has warned that advances in artificial intelligence are pushing cyberattacks into a new phase, with automation and scale bringing them firmly into the spotlight.

In an advisory issued, CERT-In said frontier AI systems are now capable of autonomously identifying software vulnerabilities, analysing large volumes of source code, and launching complex, multi-stage attacks with minimal human intervention. These systems can chain exploits across multiple systems, allowing attackers to compromise enterprise networks end-to-end, noted the agency.

The agency said this represents a shift from traditional cyber threats, which typically required specialised skills and manual execution. AI-driven automation significantly lowers the barrier for attackers, while increasing the speed, precision and reach of attacks.

The alert highlights growing risks for micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), which often lack advanced cybersecurity infrastructure. CERT-In has advised such firms to deploy threat detection tools, and to ensure continuous monitoring of networks, and maintain detailed logs for forensic analysis.

It also stressed the need for timely vulnerability disclosure and patch management, noting that delays could leave systems exposed as AI tools accelerate the discovery of weaknesses. Organisations have been asked to adopt secure coding practices, conduct regular security audits, and build AI-aware security frameworks to counter adversarial use of machine learning.

CERT-In said preserving system logs will be critical for incident response, helping reconstruct attack pathways and limit the impact of increasingly sophisticated AI-enabled cyberattacks.

MS loses exclusive access to OpenAI's tech, path clear for other major deals

Microsoft is losing exclusive access to OpenAI's technology, clearing way for ChatGPT creator to sell products across rival cloud platforms in a sweeping change to one of AI era's most consequential alliances. The reworked tie-up, announced by the companies on Monday, retains Microsoft as OpenAI's primary cloud partner with a license to the startup's intellectual property through 2032.

But Microsoft will no longer share revenue for OpenAI products it sells on cloud. Revenue OpenAI must share with Microsoft through 2030 will have a cap for total numbers and no longer tied to startup's technology milestones. REUTERS

Zensar eyes bigger deals as FY26 growth stays modest

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Bengaluru: Zensar Technologies is prioritising larger acquisitions over smaller tuck-ins, as it looks to scale through inorganic growth. "The effort, whether it's a $20 million or $200 million acquisition, is almost the same. So why not go in for something bigger?" CEO **Manish Tandon** told **TOI** after the earnings on Monday.

Rather than chasing specific technologies, the company is focusing on client depth. "It is very important that we get good client relationships in the asset... if relationships are deeper, we can sell multiple services."

Zensar is also cautious about AI-led acquisitions. "We are not proactively looking at AI assets... they are very expensive. And suddenly every company has become an AI company, so we must separate the wheat from the chaff." Responding to reports of a potential deal, Tandon said, "We continue to have ongoing conversations with companies, but that does not necessarily mean there is a deal on the table."

The company reported modest growth for FY26, with revenue of $643.7 million, up 3.1% in dollar terms and 1.7% in constant currency. March quarter revenue stood at $158.4 million, a 1% increase year-on-year but a 1.3% decline sequentially. Despite AI-led pricing pressure, Zensar sees long-term upside. "Previously, we would say 30% productivity improvement, now we are saying maybe 40–50%." The company is holding margins steadily. "We are not looking at shrinking our margins... we are becoming more price competitive but not looking at margin dilution." AI is also reshaping hiring. "Fresher hiring... will continue to be under stress," Tandon said.

TIMES GLOBAL

THE TIMES OF INDIA, BENGALURU | TUESDAY, APRIL 28, 2026

WHATEVER IS BEGUN IN ANGER ENDS IN SHAME — BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

EMILY BLUNT SAYS SHE WAS NERVOUS DURING 'THE DEVIL WEARS PRADA' SHOOT: 'MERYL STREEP USED TO GET IN CHARACTER OF A STRICT EDITOR, I FELT SCARED'

JONAH HILL SAYS HE WASN'T HAPPY FOR A WHILE: 'BUT I'M A DAD NOW, I'VE MY FAMILY, AND I'M SET TO BE HAPPY AGAIN'

Putin meets Araghchi, praises Iranians for resistance to US

Iran FM Blames Excessive US Demands For Failure Of Talks

Reuters

Russian President Putin with Iranian FM Araghchi in Saint Petersburg

Moscow: Russian President Vladimir Putin on Monday praised the Iranian people for battling to stay independent in the face of US and Israeli pressure and said Moscow would do all it could to help Tehran. Russia has offered to mediate to try to help restore calm to West Asia following US and Israeli strikes, which Moscow has strongly condemned. It has also repeatedly offered to store Iran's enriched uranium as a way of defusing tensions, a proposal spurned by the US.

"We see how courageously and heroically the Iranian people are fighting for their independence and sovereignty," Putin told Iranian foreign minister Abbas Araghchi, who was in Saint Petersburg on the fourth leg of a whirlwind diplomatic tour. Putin said he hoped Iranians could get through what he called a "difficult period" and that peace would prevail. "For our part, we will do everything that serves your interests and the interests of all the peoples of the region to ensure that peace is achieved as quickly as possible," said Putin.

Putin received Araghchi in the presidential library in Russia's former imperial capital St Petersburg as sources from mediator Pakistan said work had not halted to bridge gaps between the US and Iran. Putin said he received a message from Iran's new supreme leader, Mojtaba Khamenei, last week, and asked Araghchi to convey to him that Russia intended to continue its strategic partnership with Tehran.

Araghchi, who said he wanted to brief Putin on the situation around his country, thanked Putin for Moscow's support. "It has also been proven to all that Iran has friends and allies, such as the Russian Federation, who stand by Iran precisely in difficult times," he said. Iran's top diplomat blamed Washington for the failure of peace talks. "The US approaches caused the previous round of negotiations, despite progress, to fail to reach its goals because of excessive demands," Araghchi said. REUTERS

Hezbollah chief 'playing with fire': Israel min

Israeli defence minister Israel Katz warned Monday that Hezbollah's defiance would bring catastrophic consequences for Lebanon after the militant group's leader rejected proposed direct talks between the two countries. Lebanon and Israel's US ambassadors held two meetings in Washington in recent weeks, the first of their kind in decades. "Naim Qassem is playing with fire, and the fire will burn Hezbollah and all of Lebanon," Katz told UN envoy to Lebanon Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, according to a statement issued by his office. "If the Lebanese govt continues to take cover under the wing of the Hezbollah terrorist organisation fire will break out and engulf the cedars of Lebanon." Katz's remarks came shortly after Qassem declared that direct talks between Israel and Lebanon amounted to a "grave sin". AFP

Hormuz is int'l waterway, Iran cannot get to control it: Rubio

▶Continued from P1

That's not opening the straits. Those are international waterways. They cannot normalise, nor can we tolerate them trying to normalise, a system in which the Iranians decide who gets to use the Strait," Rubio said.

Iran's foreign minister Abbas Araghchi was in Russia Monday for a meeting with President Vladimir Putin as part of a trip that included two stops in Pakistan, where leaders are scrambling to reignite stalled talks between Tehran and Washington.

With a fragile ceasefire in place, the US and Iran are locked in a stand-off over the strait, through which a fifth of the world's traded oil and gas passes in peacetime. The US blockade is designed to prevent Iran from selling its oil, depriving it of crucial revenue while also potentially creating a situation where Tehran has to shut off production because it has nowhere to store oil.

The strait's closure, meanwhile, has put pressure on Trump, as oil and gasoline prices have skyrocketed ahead of crucial midterm elections, and it has pressured his Gulf allies, which use the waterway to export fuel. AGENCIES

Afghan officials say Pak strikes kill 7 people, injure 85 others

Kabul: Mortars and missiles fired from Pakistan on Monday struck a university and civilian homes in northeastern Afghanistan, killing seven people and wounding at least 85, Afghan officials said. Pakistan dismissed the accusation of targeting a university. The strikes were the first violent incident since Chinese-mediated peace talks between the two sides earlier this month. Pakistan and Afghanistan had been embroiled in months of deadly fighting that has killed hundreds of people since late Feb.

Pakistan's ministry of information and broadcasting dismissed Afghan media reports and official statements about the strikes on the university as "a blatant lie."

Afghan deputy govt spokesman Hamdullah Fitrat said Monday's mortar and missile attack struck the city of Asadabad, the capital of Kunar Province, as well as various areas in another district in the province on Monday afternoon. Kunar information and culture director Najibullah Hanafi said the death toll stood at seven, with 85 people wounded. Fitrat said the wounded included women, children and students at the Sayed Jamaluddin Afghani University, and described the attacks as "an unforgivable war crime, barbarity, and provocative act." Afghanistan's ministry of higher education said about 30 students and professors were injured in the strike on the university. AP

'I am not a rapist': Trump erupts in interview on attacker's accusations

Chidanand Rajghatta | TNN

AFP

Washington Hilton shooting suspect Cole Tomas Allen was on Monday charged with the attempted assassination of President Donald Trump

Washington: US President Donald Trump lashed out at a journalist who read out excerpts from a purported manifesto written by the suspect in Saturday night's security scare at a media dinner while angrily asserting that he is not a rapist or a paedophile as the assailant's screed suggested.

In an interview with CBS 60 Minutes correspondent Norah O'Donnell, Trump bristled when confronted with passages from the alleged attacker's writings that accused him of serious crimes. The president cut her off, calling her "a disgrace" and denouncing the decision to air such claims, even in the context of reporting on the suspect's motives.

"I'm not a rapist. I didn't rape anybody," Trump said, rejecting the allegations embedded in the manifesto, which investigators say was circulated shortly before the attack. The exchange quickly devolved into a broader attack on the media, with Trump accusing journalists of amplifying the words of a "sick person" and seeking to smear him on national television.

The interview, aired less than 24 hours after the dramatic security incident in Washington, offered the first extended glimpse into Trump's account of the episode. He insisted he "wasn't worried" as shots rang out near the venue, portraying the presidency as inherently dangerous and suggesting he has grown accustomed to such threats.

The shooting occurred on Saturday evening at the Washington Hilton, where scores of journalists, politicians and celebrities had gathered for the annual WHCA dinner — an event often described as Washington's most visible intersection of media and power.

Investigators say the suspect, identified as Cole Tomas Allen, had circulated a rambling manifesto that expressed anger at the federal govt and outlined a plan to target high-ranking officials. The document has become a central point of political contention, particularly after Trump's explosive reaction to its contents during the 60 Minutes interview.

While Trump praised the Secret Service response as "brave and skilful", he also made an unusual admission amid concern over the delay in evacuating him when the vice-president was taken away at least 20 second before him: the president said he may have delayed his own evacuation by hesitating to follow agents' instructions in the chaotic moments after gunfire erupted.

That acknowledgment has added to a growing controversy over security arrangements at the high-profile gathering. Critics, including former law enforcement officials, have questioned how a heavily armed individual was able to get as close as he did to an event attended by the president and much of the US leadership.

The Secret Service has defended its performance, emphasising that agents neutralised the threat before it could escalate into a mass-casualty attack. But dissenting voices argue the focus should not only be on response, but on prevention — raising the prospect of procedural changes for future events involving dense concentrations of top officials.

Politically, the episode is already reverberating across Washington. Trump has framed the attempted attack as part of a broader pattern of hostility fuelled, in his view, by political opponents — Democrats in cahoots with the liberal media. He described the suspect as a "lone wolf" but linked the incident to what he called "dangerous" narratives about his presidency.

Media commentators have seized on Trump's on-air outburst as further evidence of an increasingly adversarial relationship between the White House and the press. His decision to attack O'Donnell — particularly in response to a question grounded in reporting about the suspect — has drawn criticism from those who argue it risks legitimising hostility towards journalists.

While Trump's supporters have praised the president's rebuttal of what they see as defamatory insinuations, his critics have described the exchange as emblematic of a president unwilling to deal with uncomfortable facts. Trump signalled he does not want the WHCA dinner tradition disrupted, urging it be rescheduled. Cancelling it, he said, would hand a victory to violence.

Iran oil tankers turned back by US blockade

Reuters/File

TROUBLED WATERS

London: Six tankers loaded with Iranian oil have been forced back to Iran by the US blockade in recent days, ship-tracking data shows, underscoring the impact the Iran war is having on traffic through the Strait of Hormuz, a major global oil export route.

Between 125 and 140 ships usually crossed in and out of the strait daily before the war in Iran began on Feb 28, but only seven have done so in the past day, according to Kpler ship-tracking data and satellite analysis from SynMax, and none carrying oil bound for the global market. They included the Iranian-flagged dry bulk vessel Bavand which left from an Iranian port, and other vessels leaving from Iraqi ports, the data showed.

The US military has not provided a complete breakdown of the type of ships it has diverted or the precise location of the interceptions. "Iran has attacked and detained ships for not adhering to its required transit requirements, while the US has continued to enforce its blockade," ship broker Clarksons said on Monday.

US allowed some vessels

The six tankers forced to return to Iranian ports in recent days were carrying an estimated 10.5 million barrels of oil, according to satellite analysis from TankerTrackers.com. While the US forces in the Gulf of Oman instructed some vessels to turn back, others appeared to be allowed to sail on. Two tankers carrying around four million barrels of Iranian oil managed to sail past the blockade on April 24 bound for Asia, the data showed. Four separate, empty Iranian tankers were last seen around Pakistan's coast after returning from Asia, according to the analysis.

Analysts said US forces have been diverting Iran-linked ships as far east as the Malacca Strait, so it is unclear whether those cargoes will reach buyers or be intercepted and redirected back to Iran. Hundreds of ships and an estimated 20,000 seafarers remained stranded inside the Gulf. Those seafarers are "exposed to significant risks and psychological strain," Arsenio Dominguez, secretary-general of UN shipping agency the international maritime organisation, said on Monday. REUTERS

Bahrain revokes citizenship of 69 Iran sympathisers

Bahrain has revoked the citizenship of 69 people over what it described as sympathy with Iran's hostile acts and collaboration with foreign entities, the kingdom's interior ministry said in a statement. The ministry said that the 69 people included accused individuals and their family members, and that they were all of non-Bahraini origin.

It said the revocations had been carried out in accordance with royal directives and were based on Article 10/3 of the Bahraini Nationality Law. The article provides for the revocation of citizenship in cases of "causing harm to the interests of the Kingdom or acting in a manner that contradicts the duty of loyalty to it." REUTERS

Melania slams Kimmel's 'cruel' satire

Chidanand Rajghatta | TNN

Washington: First Lady Melania Trump joined President Trump in a separate rebuke of the media, censuring late-night host Jimmy Kimmel on Monday after he had joked that she looked like an "expectant widow" in a parody of the aborted White House Correspondents' Association that he made before the security scare.

Kimmel delivered a satirical monologue before the event imagining how the annual dinner might have unfolded, with several jokes about Trump, calling him a "drama queen" before turning to the First Lady, quipping, "Our First Lady, Melania, is here. Look at Melania, so beautiful. Mrs. Trump, you have a glow like an expectant widow."

On Monday, the First Lady issued an unusually direct statement calling the jokes "cruel and irresponsible," accusing Kimmel of trivialising a moment when lives were at risk and warning that such humour "normalises mockery of violence against public officials and their families."

President Trump called for sacking of Kimmel. "Jimmy Kimmel should be immediately fired by Disney and ABC" over the "despicable call to violence", he said on Monday.

Trump's critics, however, argue the outrage is selective, pointing to numerous instances in which Trump has used combative language that they say has encouraged violence. "Good, I'm glad he's dead... he can no longer hurt innocent people," Trump said recently about the death of former FBI director Robert Mueller.

'UK PM faces vote on likely parl probe over Mandelson'

London: Britain's parliament will vote on Tuesday over a possible inquiry into PM **Keir Starmer**, looking at whether he misled the House of Commons over the appointment of former U.S. ambassador Peter Mandelson, the Times newspaper reported.

Any such probe could have serious implications for Starmer's future. He has so far resisted pressure to quit over his decision to hire Mandelson, but if found to have knowingly misled parliament his position would likely become untenable.

The Times reported that House of Commons Speaker Lindsay Hoyle would approve a request for parliament to debate and vote upon whether the Committee of Privileges should look into the matter.

Mandelson was fired by Starmer last Sept after his relationship with the deceased sex offender Jeffrey Epstein was found to be deeper than previously known. That has raised doubts about Starmer's judgment in hiring him, exacerbated by the revelation that a security vetting body had described the appointment as a borderline case and that it was leaning against granting clearance.

Starmer's Labour Party has a majority in parliament, which could allow govt to instruct its lawmakers to vote down the launch of an inquiry. If the UK parliament did vote in favour of an inquiry, the committee, made up of lawmakers from the three biggest parties, would examine whether Starmer's statements on Mandelson amount to knowingly or inadvertently misleading the House of Commons. REUTERS

Hafiz Saeed's close aide & key LeT figure killed in Pak

Lahore: Sheikh Yousaf Afridi, a key Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) figure and a close associate of the Mumbai terror attack mastermind Hafiz Saeed, was shot dead by unidentified gunmen in Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, police said on Monday. The incident took place in Landi Kotal in the Khyber region, some 250 km from Islamabad, the capital of Pakistan.

A source in the police said that unknown armed assailants opened indiscriminate fire on Afridi, resulting in his death on the spot. No group has claimed responsibility for the attack. Afridi is said to be a key figure within the regional structure of the banned LeT.

He also reportedly played a role in the recruitment and coordination of the terror group's activities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. "The incident has sparked widespread anger in the area, and local authorities have launched an investigation to apprehend those responsible for his killing," the source said.

An official of Saeed's banned Jamat-ud-Dawa (JuD) said that Afridi was a "renowned religious scholar and belonged to the Zakhakhel tribe of Khyber and was regarded as a prominent scholar of the Ahl-e-Hadith (Salafi) school of thought." "He was targeted when unidentified attackers sprayed him with bullets and managed to flee the scene," he said.

Over a week ago in Lahore, Amir Hamza, a founding member of LeT, suffered bullet injuries in an attack. Hamza is LeT's second most important leader after Saeed, who has been in Lahore's Kot Lakhpat Jail since 2019 after getting convicted for several years in terror financing cases. PTI

Sikh man faces racist slurs, told to 'get out' of Canada

Toronto: An elderly Sikh man has been assaulted by a youth who yelled racist slurs that "get out of my country" in Canada, prompting police to investigate the "hate-motivated assault", authorities said. The incident took place on April 22 in Woodstock, Ontario, and the youth is facing multiple charges for his actions, Woodstock Police said.

The attack happened when the elderly man was walking along a sidewalk when he was approached by a youth who shoved him, it said. The police said that the youth targeted the victim based on his ethnicity and yelled racially charged comments and obscenities. The victim was not physically injured, it added. The investigation determined that the youth unprovokedly assaulted the man.

Following the incident, the youth jumped a fence into the Turtle Island School property before exiting the school area. No students were harmed during the incident, the statement added. "As a result of the investigation, the youth was arrested following the hate-motivated assault. The accused was held in custody for a bail hearing," it said.

Woodstock Police is aware that videos of this incident are circulating on social media, which show that the youth repeatedly shouting racist abuse, including, "What the-...are you doing in my country?". "You ain't from here, get the...out of my country."

"Acts of hate have no place in our community. Woodstock Police is committed to ensuring all members of the community feel protected. We encourage anyone who has experienced or witnessed a hate-motivated incident to report it to police," police said. PTI

DAILY PLANET

AFP

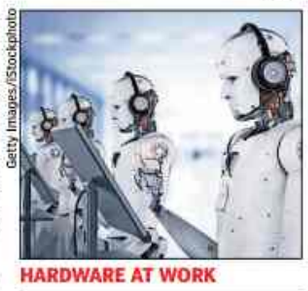
An undated photo released by Spain's royal palace shows Princess Leonor performing her second solo flight aboard a Spanish Air Force Pilatus PC-21 trainer aircraft in San Javier near Murcia

China blocks Meta from acquiring AI startup Manus

China on Monday blocked Meta's acquisition of the artificial intelligence startup Manus, which has Chinese roots but is Singapore-based. In a short statement, China's national development and reform commission, the country's top planning agency, said it was prohibiting a foreign acquisition of Manus and had required all the parties to withdraw from the deal. It did not specifically name Meta. The decision was made by the commission's Office of the Working Mechanism for Security Review of Foreign Investment in accordance with Chinese laws and regulations, the statement said. It came after Chinese authorities said they were looking into the deal earlier this year. The commission did not elaborate on the reasons for the ban. Meta first announced that it was acquiring Manus in Dec in a rare case of a major US tech group buying an AI company with strong links to China. Its deal with Manus, whose "general-purpose" AI agent can perform multi-step complex work autonomously, was expected to help expand AI offerings across Meta's platforms. Meta had said there would be "no continuing Chinese ownership interests in Manus" and that Manus would discontinue its services and operations in China. Meta said on Monday in a response that the transaction "complied fully with applicable law." "We anticipate an appropriate resolution to the inquiry," the California-based company said.

Archaeologists use AI to generate image of Pompeii victim: Archaeologists in Italy's Pompeii have for the first time used artificial intelligence to reconstruct the appearance of one of the victims of the volcanic eruption that destroyed the ancient Roman city nearly 2,000 years ago. The AI-generated image, released by the Pompeii Archaeological Park on Monday, shows a man ducking for cover while holding a large bowl over his head, with a flaming Mount Vesuvius in the background. It is based on the recent discovery of the remains of a male adult, just outside one of the southern gates of the city, which were lying next to a terracotta mortar that he presumably used as protection. Archaeologists believe the man was killed by a shower of volcanic rocks, in the early hours of the second day of the eruption.

Students wary of job market are changing course in search of 'AI-proof' majors



Getty Images/iStockphoto

HARDWARE AT WORK

Two years ago, Josephine Timperman arrived at college with a plan. She declared a major in business analytics, figuring she'd learn niche skills that would help land a good job after college. But the rise of artificial intelligence has scrambled those calculations. The basic skills she was learning in things like statistical analysis and coding can now easily be automated. "Everyone has a fear that entry-level jobs will be taken by AI," said the 20-year-old at Miami University in Ohio.

A few weeks ago, Timperman switched her major to marketing. Her new strategy is to use her undergraduate studies to build critical thinking and interpersonal skills — areas where humans still have an edge. "You don't just want to be able to code. You want to be able to have a conversation, form relationships and be able to think critically, because at the end of the day, that's the thing that AI can't replace," said Timperman, who is keeping analytics as a minor and plans to dive deeper into the subject for a one-year master's programme.

Today's college students say that picking a major that's "AI-proof" feels like shooting at a moving target as they prepare for a job market that could be fundamentally different by the time they graduate. As a result, many are reconsidering their careers. About 70% of college students see AI as a threat to their job prospects, according to a 2025 poll by the Gallup polling that finds US workers are increasingly concerned about being replaced by technologies.

"We see students all the time change majors. That's not new or different. But it's usually for a ton of different reasons," said Courtney Brown, a vice president at Lumina, an education non-profit focused on increasing the number of students who seek education beyond school. "The fact that so many students say it's because of AI — that is startling."

A recent Gallup poll of Gen Z youth and adults, between the ages of 14 and 29, found increasing scepticism and concerns about AI. Although half of Gen Z adults use AI at least "weekly," and teenagers report higher use, many in this generation see drawbacks to the technology and worry about AI's impact on their cognitive abilities and job prospects. About half — 48% — of Gen Z workers say the risks of AI in the workforce outweigh the possible benefits.

Part of the challenge for college students is that the experts they would turn to for advice, like advisers, professors and parents, don't have any answers. "Students are having to navigate this on their own, without a GPS," says Brown.

Computer science major Ben Aybar, 22, graduated last spring from the University of Chicago and applied for about 50 jobs, mostly in software engineering, without getting a single interview. He pivoted to a master's degree in computer science and meanwhile has found part-time work doing AI consulting for companies. "People who know how to use AI will be very valuable," said Aybar. "Being able to talk to people and interact with people in a very human way I think is more valuable than ever."

At the University of Virginia, data science major Ava Lawless is wondering if her major is worthwhile but can't get concrete answers. Some advisers feel that data scientists will be safe because they're the ones building AI models, but she keeps seeing gloomy job reports that indicate the contrary. "It makes me feel a bit hopeless for the future," Lawless said. "What if by the time I graduate there's not even a job market for this anymore?" She is considering switching to studio art, which is her minor.

"I'm at a point where I'm thinking if I can't get a job being a data scientist, I might as well pursue art," she said. "Because if I'm going to be unemployed, I might as well do something I love." AP

"I THINK WE DEFINITELY NEED A BREAK. I THINK WE NEED TO REFRESH AS A GROUP. THERE IS ALWAYS PRESSURE. IT'S GOING TO BE A PRESSURE GAME ALL THE TIME BUT WE HAVE TO LOOK FOR ANSWERS INSIDE, NOT OUTSIDE. WE NEED TO KEEP IT SIMPLE."
—Rishabh Pant | LSG CAPTAIN

PACERS HAVE A FIELD DAY

Hazlewood, Bhuvi Wreak Havoc As RCB Blow Away DC For 75 In 9-Wkt Win

Arani.Basu@timesofindia.com

New Delhi: The eccentricities of the IPL never cease to amaze. A venue that witnessed swinging bats and 265 being chased down successfully just two days ago saw the swinging, new white ball annihilate a batting lineup on Monday evening.

In a matter of four overs, Royal Challengers Bengaluru seamers Bhuvneshwar Kumar and Josh Hazlewood had turned the Delhi Capitals dugout into a crime scene where six batters sat buried in their seats, their self-belief wounded and the scoreboard reading 8/6. Rub your eyes and read that again.

Capitals were going at almost a run a wicket before they finished the Powerplay at 13/6. Call it the worst batting performance in the Powerplay or the best spell of fast bowling in one, those six overs served as a stark reminder of how cricket can be a great leveller.

RCB's chasing down the 76-run target in just 6.3 overs, for the loss of one wicket, was also a commentary on the superior skills of Bhuvneshwar and Hazlewood and the subpar batting acumen of the Capitals batters. The Delhi crowd had turned up to watch Virat Kohli bat and went home chanting his name as he finished the game, imperiously pulling T Natarajan over the mid-wicket boundary.

But the night will be remembered for Bhuvneshwar and Hazlewood making a telling statement with figures of 3/5 and 4/12. Here were two seasoned and proud international bowlers standing at the top of their run-ups like bloodhounds on the same field that had reduced bowlers to mere bowling machines on Saturday afternoon.

Each time they ran in, it felt like the battle was personal. Each dismissal was celebrated like it was an answer to all the helpless days bowlers endure in the IPL thanks to benign surfaces, bigger bats, short boundaries and the Impact Player rule. The pitch didn't generate the pace and bounce of the WACA in Perth, nor did the conditions offer exaggerated movement like an early-summer English track. All Bhuvneshwar and Hazlewood needed was a hint of swing in the air and comparatively more zip off the pitch to expose the technical inadequacies of the batting lineup.

Much has been said of the power-hitting on display this IPL. But a whiff of help from the conditions was enough for the RCB duo to get rolling from the moment Delhi decided to expose debutant Sahil Parakh to the first ball of the match against Bhuvneshwar. The Capitals batters fluttered in the middle like frightened chickens, unaware of what the ball was doing.

Tarun Rawat

TOP SHOW: RCB players celebrate a DC wicket in Delhi on Monday

9000 Runs for Kohli in the IPL. He is the first player to reach the landmark.

2.4 Overs in which DC lost five wickets, the earliest any team has lost its top 5 in an IPL innings. **Delhi also lost their 6th wicket by the 3.5-over mark, becoming the first IPL team to lose its top six batters before the 4th over.**

13/6 **DC have recorded the lowest Powerplay score in IPL**, eclipsing the 14/2 by RR vs RCB in 2009 and 14/3 by SRH vs RR in 2022.

7 runs aggregated by Delhi's top six batters, the second lowest in an IPL innings after Kochi Tuskers Kerala's 4 runs vs Deccan Chargers in Kochi in 2011.

SCOREBOARD

DC: S Parakh b Bhuvneshwar 0, KL Rahul c Jitesh b Hazlewood 1, N Rana c Padikkal b Hazlewood 1, S Rizvi c Jitesh b Hazlewood 0, T Stubbs c Padikkal b Bhuvneshwar 5, A Patel c Jitesh b Bhuvneshwar 0, A Porel b Hazlewood 30, D Miller c Jitesh b Dar 19, K Jamieson lbw b Krunal 12, K Yadav b Suyash 3, D Chameera not out 0; **Extras (w4): 4; Total (16.3 ovrs): 75; FoW:** 1-0, 2-2, 3-2, 4-7, 5-7, 6-8, 7-43, 8-62, 9-71, 10-75. **Bowling:** Bhuvneshwar 3-0-5-3, Hazlewood 3.3-0-12-4, Dar 2-0-21-1, Shepherd 2-0-21-0, Suyash 4-1-7-1, Krunal 2-0-9-1.

RCB: J Bethell c Natarajan b Jamieson 20, V Kohli not out 23, D Padikkal not out 34; **Extras: 0; Total (1 wkt; 6.3 ovrs): 77; FoW:** 1-26; **Bowling:** Jamieson 3-0-42-1, Chameera 2-0-18-0, Axar 1-0-5-0, Natarajan 0.3-0-12-0.

Result: RCB won by 9 wickets

1 For the first time, two bowlers have taken three wickets each in the Powerplay in an IPL innings: Bhuvneshwar Kumar (3/5) and Josh Hazlewood (3/8).

4/12 Josh Hazlewood has produced his career-best IPL performance and emulated his best T20 performance. He also took 4/12 for Australia vs Sri Lanka in a T20I in Sydney on Feb 11, 2022.

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With captain Iyer at the wheel, Punjab keep rolling on

Hindol.Basu@timesofindia.com

New Chandigarh: There was something almost theatrical about Shreyas Iyer in the nets on Monday evening. No enclosures, no comforting mesh to keep ambition in check. Just an open sky over the Maharaja Yadavindra Singh International Stadium and a batter in complete command of his range.

Most of the Punjab Kings bowlers tried their hands to get the better of him but Iyer, these days, is in a different zone. Balls disappeared into the stands with regularity. A couple of defensive prods were offered, perhaps out of politeness, but they felt like interruptions. Iyer was preparing to dominate.

There has been a defining shift in Iyer's batting this season. His evolution has been as much about temperament as it has been about output. A calmness that underpins the aggression, a sense that he knows exactly how far he can push without tipping over.

In that sense, the comparison with Virat Kohli as a "chase master" doesn't feel forced anymore. The template is very similar: absorb the moment, understand the equation, and then bend it to your will. His unbeaten 71 off 36 balls in the record 265-run chase last Saturday in Delhi wasn't just about clean hitting; it was more about control and the ability to remain unruffled under pressure.

A significant part of that transformation can be traced to his partnership with head coach Ricky Ponting. The Iyer–Ponting axis has given Punjab Kings belief that they can go all the way.

That system has been supercharged by the explosive starts provided by Priyansh Arya and Prabhsimran Singh. Their 116-run Powerplay assault in the chase against DC was an extension of Punjab's philosophy. Attack early, stretch the game and let Iyer engineer the finish.

Punjab now return to New Chandigarh for their final home game before shifting base to Dharamshala and the expectation is to keep their momentum intact against a Rajasthan Royals side that has begun to stall. Royals started with four wins on the bounce but have since drifted.

HOW THEY STAND

TEAM	M	W	L	NR	NRR	P
PBKS	7	6	0	1	1.333	13
RCB	8	6	2	0	1.919	12
SRH	8	5	3	0	0.815	10
RR	8	5	3	0	0.602	10
GT	8	4	4	0	-0.475	8
CSK	8	3	5	0	-0.121	6
DC	8	3	5	0	-1.060	6
KKR	8	2	5	1	-0.751	5
MI	7	2	5	0	-0.736	4
LSG	8	2	6	0	-1.106	4

Crompton
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RAGHUVANSHI COPS FINE FOR OUTBURST

Lucknow: Kolkata Knight Riders batter Angkrish Raghuvanshi was on Monday fined 20 per cent of his match fee for his emotional outburst after being given out for obstructing the field during his side's IPL match against Lucknow Super Giants here.

KKR won the game via Super Over on Sunday night.

The incident occurred in the fifth over. After being given out for 'obstructing the field', he struck the boundary cushion with his bat and subsequently threw his helmet into the dugout. PTI

Sooryavanshi says criticism 'affects me'

New Delhi: Vaibhav Sooryavanshi says criticism fuelled his latest IPL heroics, in a rare insight into how the 15-year-old handles the pressure of being the outstanding young talent in world cricket.

The teenage Indian batsman smacked a 36-ball century to become the youngest and fastest to score 1,000 T20 runs, following a couple of rare flops including a golden duck.

His 103 off 37 balls for Rajasthan Royals against Sunrisers Hyderabad came after being dismissed on the first ball by their debutant pace bowler Praful Hinge on Apr 13.

Returning to face Hyderabad on Saturday, the left-hander launched Hinge for four consecutive sixes in the opening over, setting the tone for his second IPL hundred.

"After getting out in the last match I went back and checked my phone," Sooryavanshi, whose media appearances are restricted because of his age, said in a video released by Rajasthan.

"I saw a lot of things. I usually don't pay attention to those things, but when someone says something to me personally, it affects me a bit.

"I only wanted to answer with my bat."

PTI

His knock, laced with five fours and 12 sixes, ended in defeat but drew widespread praise, including from Hyderabad skipper Pat Cummins, who called the teenager his "new favourite player".

"You know how important it was for me. I was just trying to do exactly what I did in practice," said Sooryavanshi. "I was playing with a free flow from the first ball."

The batting prodigy has been in red-hot form in the 2026 edition of the IPL, scoring 357 runs at a staggering strike rate of 234.86 across eight matches, including two 15-ball fifties. His performances have sparked calls for him to be fast-tracked into the senior national team. AGENCIES

MAHARAJ IN AS SANTNER'S REPLACEMENT

Mumbai: Mumbai Indians on Monday confirmed the signing of South African left-arm spinner Keshav Maharaj as a replacement for Mitchell Santner, who has been ruled out of IPL 2026, due to the injury he sustained on his left shoulder during their previous match.

Maharaj, one of South Africa's most experienced spinners across all formats, has been a consistent presence in the Proteas setup since his international debut in 2016. TNN

You always back your best players: Langer

LSG Coach Says Pooran's Record Against Narine Made Him The Best Option Despite Poor Form

Fazal Khan | TNN

Lucknow: A day after Lucknow Super Giants' Super Over gamble backfired against Kolkata Knight Riders, head coach Justin Langer defended the decision to send an out-of-form Nicholas Pooran to face Sunil Narine, saying the team had chosen to back "its best players" in the tightest phase of the match.

Sunday night's IPL game at the Ekana Stadium finished with both sides on 155, before Narine turned the Super Over decisively KKR's way. Pooran was bowled first ball, LSG were restricted to 1/2 and KKR needed just one delivery to complete the win.

"We knew Narine would bowl, and if you look at Nicholas Pooran's record, he's faced Narine more than almost anyone in world cricket. We felt he was still our best option," Langer said. "I know he hasn't hit form yet, but if anyone can produce a big moment, it's Nicky. You back your best players. He has struggled, but the numbers say no one plays Narine better than him. Unfortunately, it didn't come off."

It is curious that Langer felt that way. After all, Narine had bowled a maiden over to the left-hander in the Super Over in 2014 in a CPL match between T & T Red Steel and Guyana Amazon Warriors and even dismissed him. Surely, the LSG support staff should have been aware of that.

Pooran's failure extended a lean run that has hurt LSG in a season now slipping away from them. The defeat was LSG's fourth straight loss at home and dropped them to 10th in the standings, leaving them virtually out of playoff contention.

Creimas

Pooran getting bowled by Narine

Langer, though, was not willing to isolate Pooran. He said the West Indian, among the most destructive T20 batters in the world over the past few years, was going through a phase that even elite players are not immune to.

"It just shows he's human," Langer said. "You can't force confidence. You can try to look confident but it comes from getting your processes right and working every day. He's putting in the effort to get it back. Sometimes, it's just a tough game."

LSG captain Rishabh Pant had also backed the call after the match, saying Pooran's name came up during a group discussion because the team wanted to trust a proven match-winner in a high-pressure situation.

'Powerplays have become decisive'

Hindol.Basu@timesofindia.com

New Chandigarh: Sometime in the IPL-2026 season, the middle overs stopped mattering. The death overs still produce their theatre but a growing number of games this season have been decided within the first six overs. The two Powerplays, therefore, have become the most consequential stretch of a match.

Punjab Kings assistant coach Brad Haddin has been watching this shift from close quarters. "What we are seeing is a trend throughout the tournament and how impressive most teams at the top have been in the first six overs," he said. "It's so hard to stop teams now with the way they're playing the first six overs. That's why Powerplay is becoming decisive and many games are being decided within the two Powerplays in the two innings.

"You've obviously got the replacement player to come in so you can juggle whether that's an extra batsman, allowing your top order to go harder than they have done in the past," Haddin said.

The presence of that extra batter has altered intent. Risk is no longer optional or a gamble, it is an instruction. For bowlers and coaches, this has triggered a constant search for disruption. "From a coach's point of view, you've got to keep trying to find ways where you can slow the scoring down," Haddin said. "It can be about picking wickets. It can be about getting the batsman to hit you in the area that you want him to hit."

Rajasthan Royals seamer Sandeep Sharma echoed the sentiment. "Powerplays are becoming so crucial that matches are often decided within those opening phases of both innings," he said.

What makes this shift particularly striking is the consistency with which teams are executing it. This is no longer about one or two sides redefining the tempo; it is a tournament-wide phenomenon. "The first six overs have turned into a decisive phase this tournament, with teams consistently excelling and making it tough for bowlers to respond," Sharma added.

WEATHER 29°C

5 Rajasthan Royals have won five out of the last eight IPL matches played against Punjab Kings — one each in 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024 & 2025. Punjab's last three wins against Rajasthan came by five runs on Apr 5, 2023 and by five wickets on May 15, 2024, both in Guwahati, and by 10 runs in Jaipur on May 18, 2025.

5/32 Arshdeep Singh's only five-wicket haul in the IPL came for Punjab Kings vs Rajasthan Royals in Dubai (DICS) on Sept 21, 2021.

–Stats: Rajesh Kumar

Advani cruises into quarters; Parikh wins

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

India's Siddharth Parikh rallied splendidly to put it across fourth-seeded Peter Sheehan in the pre-quarterfinals of the IBSF World Billiards Championship in Carlow, Ireland on Monday.

The 45-year-old Mumbaikar's come-from-behind 575-508 victory set up a **WORLD BILLIARDS** quarterfinal meeting with fifth seed Robert Hall. Hall outclassed former champion Mike Russell 882-258.

Elsewhere, favourite **Pankaj Advani**, given the top billing after the reseeding for the knockouts, demolished fellow Indian Rafath Habib 951-283 to sail into the quarters. He meets Martin Goodwill, a 497-319 victor over Alok Kumar. Reigning champion Sourav Kothari scored a lopsided 701-211 victory over Dhruv Sitwala.

Results (Indians unless mentioned): Pre-quarterfinals: Pankaj Advani 951 (192, 56, 143, 139, 73, 105, 52) bt Rafath Habib 283 (50); Martin Goodwill (Eng) 497 (176, 95) bt Alok Kumar 319 (68); Robert Hall (Eng) 882 (75, 221, 82, 65, 224, 114) bt Mike Russell (Eng) 258 (93, 66); Siddharth Parikh 575 (83, 71, 126, 82) bt Peter Sheehan (Eng) 508 (98, 158, 54, 91). Sourav Kothari 701 (176, 198, 175) bt Dhruv Sitwala 211 (55, 71); Shrikrishna S 604 (140, 206, 81, 85) bt Peter Gilchrist (Sin) 357 (90, 113, 111); Dhvaj Haria 745 (103, 82, 84, 122, 171) bt Rupesh Shah 293 (61, 88, 61); David Causier (Eng) 1517 (611, 93, 71, 88, 57, 558) bt Baek Minhu (Kor) 158 (84).

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India blank Oz, enter quarters

Manne.Ratnakar @timesofindia.com

Indian men eased into the quarterfinals of the Thomas Cup with a 5-0 victory against Australia in their second Group A tie in Horsens, Denmark on Monday.

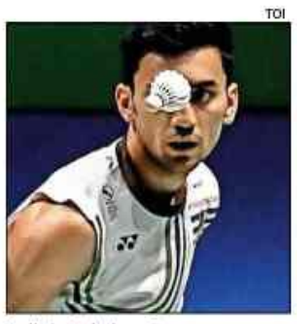
The 2022 champions share the top spot in group with defending champions China. While India beat Canada 4-1 on the first day, China blanked Australia 5-0 on April 24 and Canada 4-1 on Monday.

Group A toppers will be decided when India play China on Wednesday.

The Indians did not lose a single set against the lower-ranked Aussies. Lakshya Sen drubbed Ephraim Stephen Sam 21-14, 21-16 to win the first point for India. US Open champion Ayush Shetty trounced Shrey Dhand 21-8, 21-6.

In the first men's doubles match, Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty downed Rizky Hidayat and Jack Yu 21-14, 21-16.

TOI



India's Lakshya Sen

In the third singles, HS Prannoy had it easy against Rishi Honda Boopathy 21-11, 21-17. The doubles duo of Hariharan Amsakarunan and MR Arjun outclassed Andika Ramadiansyah and Ephraim Stephen Sam 21-12, 21-10 in the last match.

Result: India bt Australia 5-0 (Lakshya Sen bt Ephraim Stephen Sam 21-14, 21-16; Ayush Shetty bt Shrey Dhand 21-8, 21-6; Satwiksairaj Rankireddy/Chirag Shetty bt Rizky Hidayat/Jack Yu 21-14, 21-16; HS Prannoy bt Rishi Honda Boopathy 21-11, 21-17; Hariharan Amsakarunan/MR Arjun bt Andika Ramadiansyah/Ephraim Stephen Sam 21-12, 21-10).

Seasoned Sindhu assumes charge

Hyderabad: Former world champion PV Sindhu has assumed charge as a Badminton World Federation (BWF) council member after being elected as chair of the BWF Athletes' Commission in Dec 2025, reports **Manne Ratnakar.**

It is rare for an active and top-ranked player to get a key position in the sport's governing body. Sindhu will hold the position till April 2029. The council plays a crucial role in governance of badminton worldwide. As a voting member of the council, she will participate in discussions and decisions that shape the future of the sport. The council is the highest decision-making body of BWF, which will decide on the strategic direction of the sport. TNN

India batters falter modest chase

Benoni (South Africa): India suffered yet another batting meltdown in a modest 156-run chase as South Africa rode on skipper Laura Wolvaardt's sublime unbeaten 92 to clinch a convincing 23-run win and seal the women's T20I series 4-1 in dominant fashion.

WOMEN'S T20I

Wolvaardt, who has already notched up two fifties and a century in the series, struck 11 fours and two sixes in her 56-ball knock, carrying her bat despite wickets falling around her. Her late flourish —two sixes off the final two balls —lifted South Africa past the 150-mark after a middle-overs slowdown. In reply, India were restricted to 132/8, with their experienced batters once again failing to deliver. Skipper Harmanpreet Kaur laboured to 22 off 28 balls, while Shafali Verma (4), Jemimah Rodrigues (1) and Deepti Sharma (8) fell cheaply. It was left to Bharti Fulmali to provide some fight with a counter-attacking 40 off 30 balls (4x4, 2x6), but India's middle-overs stagnation following a poor start proved costly.

South Africa's bowlers were disciplined throughout, with Nonkululeko Mlaba leading the charge with an impressive 2/15, including a maiden, and accounting for Harmanpreet. Nadine de Klerk also picked up two wickets. **South Africa: 155/6 in 20 overs** (Laura Wolvaardt 92 no, Deepti Sharma 2-37) **bt India: 132/8 in 20 overs** (Bharti Fulmali 40, Nadine de Klerk 2-26). PTI

Delhi HC lets AITA's 024 poll results stand, appoints administrator

New Delhi: The Delhi High Court on Monday allowed the results of the All India Tennis Association (AITA) elections held on September 28, 2024, to stand, but directed that the elected body will function only as an interim arrangement under the supervision of a court-appointed Administrator, former Chief Justice Gita Mittal.

In its order, Justice Mini Pushkarna made it clear that while the outcome of the 2024 elections will not be disturbed at this stage, the executive committee will operate in a limited capacity and remain subject to the oversight of Justice (Retd.) Mittal.

It means that Chintan Parikh, who is from the Gujarat State Association, is the new AITA president while Maharashtra's Sunder Iyer is general secretary. Dinesh Arora from Punjab Association is treasurer while KSLTA's Sunil Yajaman is one of the joint secretaries. The court tasked Justice Mittal with managing the affairs of AITA and ensuring that its functioning is aligned with the National Sports Code. PTI

SNAP SHOTS

Chanu to miss Asian C'ships

Star Indian weightlifter Mirabai Chanu is set to miss the rescheduled Asian Championships in Gandhinagar next month due to a shoulder injury. The Tokyo Olympics silver medallist and former world champion had sustained the injury during the National Championships in Feb. Komal Kohar is likely to take Chanu's place in the team.

Latham ruled out: Black Caps Ssipper Tom Latham has been ruled out of the first T20 against Bangladesh after sustaining a toe injury during a training session, New Zealand Cricket confirmed.

Pranavi ends T-24: Pranavi Urs carded 1-under 72 to finish as the top-Indian at tied-24th in the Investec SA Women's Open golf tournament, even as compatriot Diksha Dagar (76) slipped on the final day in Cape Town. Pranavi and Diksha finished T-24th and T-37th respectively, while Avani Prashanth (77) was T-57th.

Dean & Gagan finish 7th in WRC3 debut: Indian rally champions Dean Mascarenhas and co-driver Gagan Karumbaiah successfully completed their maiden FIA World Rally Championship, finishing 7th in the WRC3 class debut at the 50th edition of Rally Islas Canarias 2026, completing one of the season's most demanding all-asphalt events in the WRC in Las Palmas, Spain on Sunday. Competing along with higher-powered cars in the Premier Classes, the Indian duo finished overall 48th and 7th in their class, the WRC3 class.

Premish to lead: Premish T will lead the state team in the Swami Vivekananda U-20 men's National Football Championship 2025-26 to be held in Narayanpur, Chhattisgarh. Karnataka will kick off their campaign against West Bengal in the Group E clash on May 2. The other teams in group E are Lakshwadeep and Odisha. **Team:** Aryan Yogesh, Moulik Doshi, Shaurya Rastogi, Mohammed Kaif, Paotinmang Tuboi, Kanik Anil, Dhruv C, Rayuel Derryck Ahamed Beale, Paolunthang Simte, Shalom Sant Thapa, Darshan V, Satminlun Khongsai, Premish T (C), Deekshith K, Johnstar M Marak, Nirupam Gowda H, Meitram Kangleinganba Singh, Shogouhou Haokip. **Head coach:** Siddharth Bhatia; **Assistant coach:** Jayavandan S; **Manager:** Febin Francis; **Physiotherapist:** Charan Kumar.

THE HUMAN RACE

WITH ATHLETICS' FINAL BARRIER NOW BROKEN, THE 'SUB-2' MAKES US MARATHONERS BELIEVE LIMITS ARE MEANT TO BE PUSHED

Sawan Barwal

Impossible has been made possible at the London Marathon. A feat that looked out of reach for at least a few more years has now been achieved. For us marathoners, Sabastian Sawe's feat was an unforgettable moment to witness — the breaking of the two-hour barrier, not once, but twice in a single race. It truly felt like was history unfolding in real time.

I would call it a race for the ages. Sawe completed the 42.195 km in 1:59:30, just 11 seconds behind was Ethiopia's debutant Yomif Kejelcha, also under two hours! Performances like these give athletes like me great belief that even the highest benchmarks can be challenged.

I analysed the race closely with my coaches. We discussed how such performances are shaping the future of running and what adjustments I can make to improve my own timings. Earlier this month, I clocked 2:11:58 in Rotterdam, setting a new national record and breaking a 48-year-old Indian mark. That achievement means a lot to me, but what happened in London motivates me to aim even higher.

One thing that stood out in London was the race strategy. Sawe completed the second half faster than the first, at just 59:01. If I were to target a 2:08 marathon in the future, which is my goal for the Asian Games, I'd break the race into three segments. First, I would target an average pace of 6:07 per km. For the first five kms, I'd aim for 6:10 per km. I'll then settle into 6:07 per km until 30km and then increase my intensity for the final 12 at 6:05 per km. It's called the '10-10-10' method.

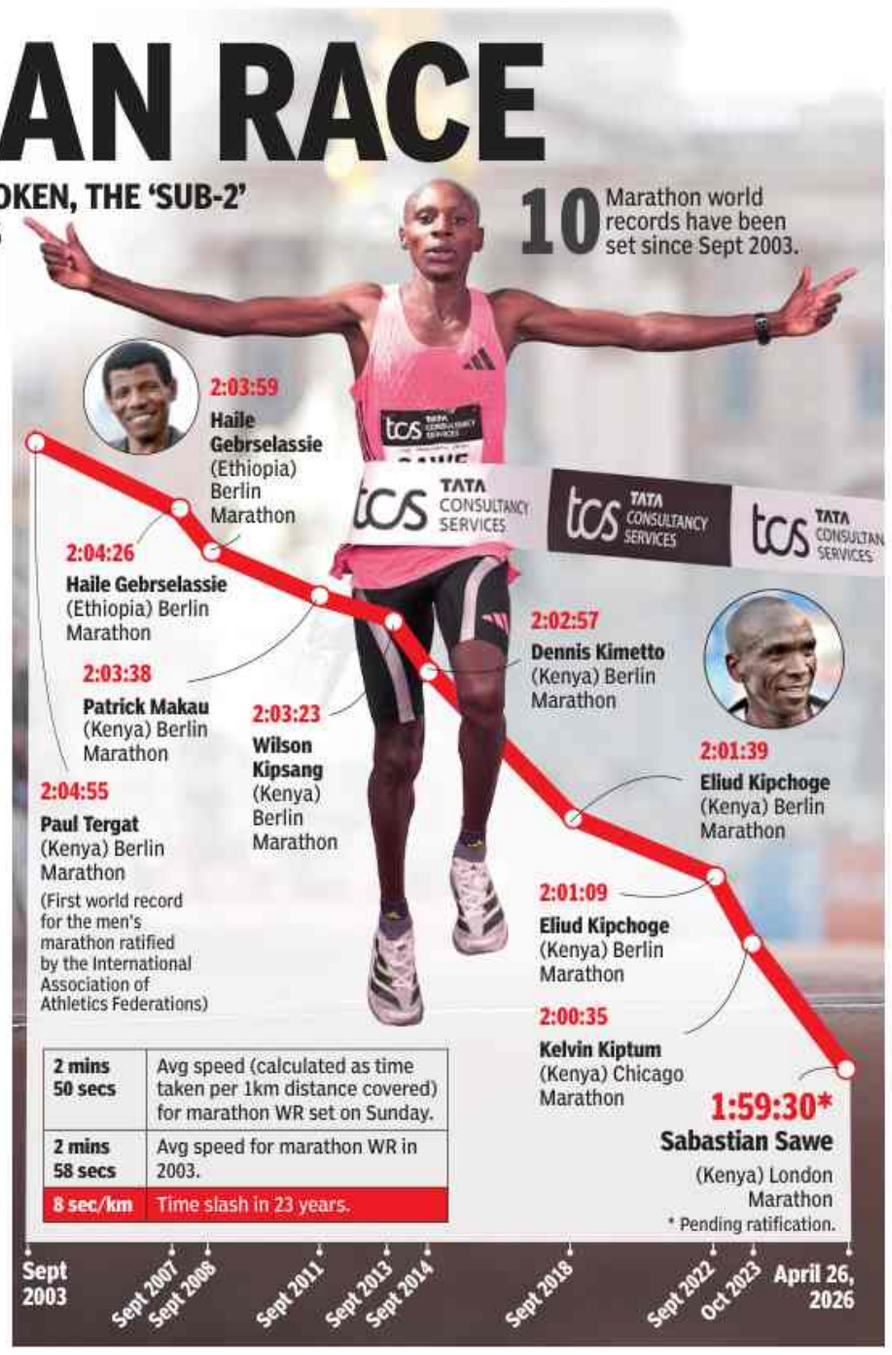
TOI Exclusive

Among other factors in London, one element is the advancement in what we call "super shoes". These next-generation, ultra-light shoes with energy-returning foam and carbon plates have significantly enhanced performance. The technology has reduced the human element in marathon times. I have been using ASICS Meta Speed shoes, and they have helped me bring down my timings.

But the key factor were pacemakers. They are central to elite racing, helping maintain rhythm, conserve energy, and structure the race intelligently. In London, they set consistent splits and guided the frontrunners in each phase.

I often train at Colorado Springs, where training alongside quality pacemakers has significantly enhanced my marathon experience.

(Holder of the National record in marathon, Sawan Barwal spoke to ***Sabi Hussain****).*



Sabalenka advances; Gauff makes an exit

World number one **Aryna Sabalenka** overcame Naomi Osaka 6-7 (1/7), 6-3, 6-2 in a gripping battle on Monday to reach the Madrid Open quarterfinals.

Third seed Coco Gauff was eliminated in a three-set battle with Linda Noskova decided on a final set tie-break.

Sabalenka, who has claimed titles at Miami, Indian Wells and Brisbane this year,

TENNIS

was tested by her Japanese opponent in the fourth-round clash but came back from a set and a break down to triumph.

"I was just trying to take one ball at a time and my team was there for me, they really (pushed) me to keep fighting," said Sabalenka on court.

Sabalenka sealed her victory serving to love with an ace to reach the last eight, where she will face American Hailey Baptiste, who beat Belinda Bencic in three sets, including losing a tie break 16-14 in the second.

World number three Gauff, who had been dealing with a stomach bug this week, fell to a 6-4, 1-6, 7-6 (7/5) defeat by Noskova. In the men's third round, Daniil Medvedev beat Nicolai Budkov Kjaer 6-3, 6-2.

Casper Ruud eased to a 6-3, 6-1 win over Alejandro Davidovich Fokina, while Stefanos Tsitsipas defeated Daniel Merida 6-4, 6-2. AFP

Stopping The Georgian Is Key To The Munich Club's Chances Against PSG

Bayern's concern: Kvaratskhelia

Paris: Bayern Munich must find a way to stop Paris Saint-Germain winger Khvicha Kvaratskhelia when the sides meet in the first leg of their Champions League semifinal on Tuesday. Kvaratskhelia has scored eight goals so far, including another fine solo effort against Liverpool in the first leg of their quarterfinal. That's twice as many as teammate Ousmane Dembele, the current men's Ballon d'Or holder. "He is such an important player for us," PSG coach Luis Enrique said Tuesday. "Not just for his abilities but for what he transmits as a player."

Kvaratskhelia's performance against Liverpool led the British press to compare the 25-year-old Georgia star's style of play to that of George Best, the late Manchester United great known for his extraordinary dribbling, amazing balance and spectacular goals.

"When I come inside and shoot it is down to hard work," Kvaratskhelia said. "It depends on our opponents as well. I also work on it with the national team."

He scored with a brilliant curler against Chelsea in the first leg of the last 16, then followed up with another goal in the away leg as PSG routed the London side 8-2 on aggregate. Prior to that, it was goal midway through the second half that turned the tide PSG's way in a tough playoff against Monaco.

He has 16 goals overall this season for PSG, beating his previous best of 14 when starring for Serie A winner Napoli in the 2022-23 season.

MBAPPE IN DOUBT Real Madrid striker Kylian Mbappe is a doubt for the Clasico on May 10 after his club confirmed on Monday he has sustained a thigh injury. "He has been diagnosed with an injury to the semitendinosus muscle in his left leg," said Los Blancos in a statement, after the France captain was hurt during La Liga last Friday. AP

Mysore A prevail

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: Mysore 'A' displayed a dominant performance to ease past DYES, Mandya, 47-26, in the U-13 girls' Super League stage of the State sub-junior basketball championship here on Monday. Mysore's sharp coordination and calculated passes allowed them to maintain a consistent lead throughout.

Mysore's teamwork was evident in their interceptions, quick long passes, and on-court chemistry, allowing them to score before DYES

BASKETBALL

could recover in defence. They moved the ball smartly, involving multiple players in attack while also collecting crucial rebounds, ensuring that their success was a collective effort rather than relying on individual brilliance. DYES put up a strong fight and brought the score to 14-12 soon after the first quarter, but Mysore eventually pushed through and widened the gap, securing a comfortable win. Niriksha led the scoring with 15 points.

In another afternoon fixture in the boys category, MCHS secured a comfortable 63-17 win over Mysore B.

Results (Super League) Boys: Vimanapura 57 (Rakshith 16) bt Young Orions 37 (Arnav 10, Karthik 9) HT: 24-18; Beagles 53 (Dishant 12, Nikhil 12) bt Dharwad A 48 (Nagaraj 14, Samarth 13) HT: 19-6; PPC 68 (Narrun 26, Daiwik 17) bt Kolar 39 (Pallav 13) HT: 19-20; MNK Rao 54 (Padmanbha 8) bt Lakshyan 11 (Hanumanth 10) HT: 28-4; MCHS 63 (Dhairya 10) bt Mysore B 17 (Rishaan 7) HT: 41-5; Yelahanka BC 64 (Arnav 11, Showrya 10) bt Hassan 24 (Pranav 14) HT: 40-2; Mounts BC 48 (Jithin 16 Thimmaiah 16) bt Kolar 46 (Nehal 16, Manish 10) HT: 17-25.

Girls: Bangalore Sporting 39 (Deethali 10, Sagarika 8) bt Kalaburagi 10 (Anvita 10) HT: 22-6; Mounts BC 58 (Niya 14, Devishi 8, Kenisha 8) bt Dharwad A 26 (Shravani 9) HT: 48-18; BCYA 44 (Niharika 13, Sanchita 10) bt Halasur BC 8. HT: 28-2; Beagles 93 (Dia 18, Ayra 17, Anidhya 14) bt Kalaburagi 24 (Sneha 11) HT: 58-16; MCHS 60 (Swarali 16, Kanira 10) bt Dharwad B 08 (Samanvitha 7) HT: 24-2; Mysore A 47 (Niriksha 17, Kushi 12) bt Mandya 26 (Tejaswini 12) HT: 22-16; Young Orions 41 (Aaeeisha 10) bt Mysore B 10. HT: 16-7; Hoop-7 48 (Dhanyashree 21) bt Dharwad A 13 (Shravani 6) HT: 33-4.

— Jia Khosla

Aadya, Shreya emerge champions

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: Aadya Gowda and Shreya Rajesh were crowned champions in the open and girls' categories, respectively, at the State U-13 chess championship in Mysuru on Sunday. Shreya was tied at 7.5 points with Indusheetala, with the former prevailing through the tie-break system. The winners and the runners-up will represent Karnataka at the National U-13 Championship to be held in Puducherry in Sept.

Results (Final standings): Girls: U-13: 1: Shreya Rajesh (B'luru U; 7.5), 2: Indusheetala

CHESS

(B'luru U; 7.5), 3: Aadya Ranganath (B'luru U; 7.5), **U-11**: 1: Charushi B (B'luru U, 6), 2: Hanishka Mishra (B'luru R; 6), 3: Kaushi Kulkarni (B'luru U; 6), **U-9**: 1:Darshvi Rai (B'luru; 6, 2: Dishitha H Raj (Hassan; 5), 3: Hemasree Chalagulla (B'luru; 5), **U-7:** 1: Sai Raksha SJ (B'luru U; 4), 2: Hanvika V Rao (Mysuru; 4), 3: Vishwatha M (Hassan; 4).

Open : U-13: 1. Aadya Gowda (B'luru; 8), 2: Ishaan Bhansali (B'luru; 7.5), 3: Samanth Nataraj Naidu (B'luru U; 7), **U-11:** 1:Sanav Datta (B'luru U; 6.5), 2: Chayank Ramesh (B'luru U, 6.5), 3: Nischith Gurukar K (Chikkamagaluru; 6.5), **U-9:** 1: Aadruth P (B'luru U; 5.5), 2: Viyaan Shrikantappa (B'luru U; 5.5) 3: Ritvik D (B'luru U; 5.5), **U-7:** 1: Shivansh Gowda (B'luru U; 4.5), 2: Saishn Surya C (B'luru U; 4.5), 3: V Viyan Kadam (B'luru; 4).

Dominant Hiba triumphs

Bengaluru: Hiba Gabriel from Flying Sea Stallion was in fine form at the Karnataka State Equestrian Competition 2026, which was held at the Embassy International Riding School (EIRS) here on Sunday. The youngster, a student of Greenwood High International School, claimed the top spot in the Show Jumping 120cm Class event. The teenager placed first astride Ascot De Jaf. She returned to take the second place as well, riding Freezing Rain. In the Show Jumping 100cm Class event, Nikshita from EIRS, astride Elliot, clinched gold.

Results: Introductory Dressage Test Class: D3 – 1. Bishal (Khumba; EIRS), 2. Manil Rao (Sultan; FSS), 3. Jere-

EQUESTRIAN

my Sam Ashish (Sultan; FSS); **Preliminary Dressage Test Class: D4** – 1. Tanush (Leona; EIRS), 2. Zoya (Prometheus; EIRS), 3. Kripa (Imagine; EIRS); **Pre-Novice Dressage Test Class: D5** – 1. Tanush (Leona; EIRS), 2. Bhargav (Vadim; EIRS), 3. Nikshita (Elliot; EIRS); **Novice Dressage Test Class: D6** – 1. Kiara (Rio; EIRS), 2. Arya Channagiri (Cloud 9; FSS), 3. Hem Kilaru (Abra; EIRS); **Show Jumping 60cm Class: SJ2** – 1. Nitya S (Ultimate Warrior; REA), 2. Jeremy Sam Ashish (Ring Tone; FSS), 3. Jeremy Sam Ashish (Chief of Command; FSS); **Show Jumping 80cm Class: SJ3** – 1. Dhanvi Cheruvu (Bhima; FSS), 2. Dhanvi Cheruvu (Black Bird; FSS), 3. Zoya (Prometheus; EIRS); **Show Jumping 100cm Class: SJ4** – 1. Nikshita (Elliot; EIRS), 2. Rishab (Hero; EIRS), 3. Arya Channagiri (Black Bird; FSS), 3. Siddarth (Cadillac; EIRS); **Show Jumping 120cm Class: SJ6** – 1. Hiba Gabriel (Ascot de Jaf; FSS), 2. Hiba Gabriel (Freezing Rain; FSS); **Follow the Leader Dressage Class:** D2 – 1. Vishruth Ghosh (Altra Strada; REA); **40cm Show Jumping Clear Round Class: SJ1** – Clear: Hardik Hurkat (War Soldier; REA), Ashish (Deemed to Fire; Saddlebrook), Mahesh (Deemed to Fire; Saddlebrook), Jeremy Sam Ashish (Chief of Command; FSS). TNN

TIMES NATION

Will be back soon for oath ceremony, says Modi exuding confidence of win

'TMC Forgot The Essence Of Maa, Mati, Manush'

Rohit Khanna | TNN

Kolkata: Prime Minister Narendra Modi wrapped up his party's Bengal campaign on Monday with an ear to the ground and his eyes fixed on the "historic change" that he predicted would unravel on May 4, with him back soon after to attend the swearing-in of the state's first BJP govt.

"I sensed the mood of the people of Bengal wherever I went. I am more confident than ever that I have to be present here for the oath-taking ceremony," PM Modi declared in Barrackpore, his last campaign stop before the second phase of polling.

India's journey to prosperity, he said, would be incomplete without "purvoday" (rise of the east). "The change that this election brings will alter the fate of entire eastern India. Keeping Bengal safe is my duty. I will never shy away from my responsibilities," he said. Seeking to highlight BJP's historical proximity to Bengal, Modi recounted the rise of Jana Sangh, his party's ideological precursor, in the state. "The presidency region of Bengal gave birth to Jana Sangh and elected Syama Prasad Mookerjee as an MP. A BJP govt in Bengal will fulfil his vow of ending the perils of refugees," he said. "A BJP govt will frame policies based on the spirit of Vande Mataram."

PM Narendra Modi receives a warm welcome in Barrackpore on Monday

TMC-BJP clash hrs before PM rally

Hours before PM Modi addressed a rally at Jagaddal in Bengal's North 24 Parganas district on Monday, clashes broke out barely 400m from the venue between TMC and BJP workers, which escalated into gunfire, stone pelting and crude bomb attacks, leaving a CISF jawan wounded with bullet injuries. Six others were also injured. TNN

The PM accused CM Mamata Banerjee's TMC of failing the state over three terms, saying the governing party forgot the very essence of "Maa, Mati, Manush" slogan that propelled it to office for the first time in 2011. "I never heard that slogan during the entire campaign. They abused Modi; they abused the armed forces and democratic institutions. They intimidated people," he said.

Modi promised that BJP forming the next govt would mark the beginning of an economic transformation, including industrial zones near Kolkata joining the "hub" of the Make-in-India project. He also assured the state of an "industrial revival package", a guarantee of 125 days of employment under the G RAM G scheme, faster expansion of Kolkata's metro network, preservation of trams and more EV buses for cities.

On Mamata's old promise of turning "Kolkata into London", Modi said, "Didi changed the city's identity instead. Infiltrators have settled in Kolkata. Humein Kolkata ko Kolkata hi banana hai (We want to restore Kolkata's identity)."

Modi described his hectic campaign as a "spiritual journey" rather than just another pitch for votes. "My roadshows weren't limited to politics. I never got tired during the course of the campaign... I was overwhelmed by the love of the people. Every visit was like teerth yatra. The love and kindness I saw in the eyes of kids, youth, women and the elderly are my life's savings."

Shah: Vote fearlessly, central forces will stay for 60 days after polls

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Union home minister Amit Shah wound up his poll campaign in Bengal on Monday by asking people to vote fearlessly without worrying about the "goons" of CM Mamata Banerjee, as central armed police forces (CAPFs) have been deployed everywhere and will remain stationed in the state for 60 days after elections.

"Don't worry about Didi's goons. The EC has deployed CAPFs in every nook and cranny. Today, as I leave, I am saying a BJP govt will come to office after elections. Still, CAPFs will stay here for the next 60 days," he said while addressing a roadshow in Kolkata's Behala, in a message of reassurance to his party's supporters in a state marred by incidents of post-poll violence in the past.

At Chandannagar, he sharpened his pitch, saying: "There are apprehensions that there will be violence. Don't worry... I am asking Didi's goons not to step out of their homes. Otherwise, we will straighten them up after May 4."

BJP has repeatedly accused TMC of orchestrating violent attacks on its workers after previous elections.

Union home minister Amit Shah offers prayers at Gangasagar in West Bengal's South 24 Parganas district on Monday

The deployment of nearly 2,400 CAPF companies, unprecedented in the state's electoral history, is being seen as a determined attempt to scuttle any 'strong-arm tactics' of TMC, which, in turn, has alleged it is aimed at intimidating its supporters to help BJP.

Meanwhile, BJP has alleged "an assassination attempt" on Sukanta Majumdar, a Z-category protectee, and Behala West candidate Indranil Khan during a rally near Sarsuna bus stand. Majumdar and Khan were allegedly surrounded by an "unlawful assembly" of 50-60 armed people, reportedly linked to TMC.

Mamata invokes SIR queues, urges voters to 'teach BJP a lesson'

Tamaghna Banerjee & Sarthak Ganguly | TNN

West Bengal CM and TMC chief Mamata Banerjee rides pillion on a scooter during a roadshow in Kolkata

Kolkata: Bengal CM and Trinamool Congress chief Mamata Banerjee invoked Monday memories of harassment during SIR queues, urging voters to "stand in a line once more" and respond through ballots to "teach BJP a lesson" as she wrapped up campaigning with a series of roadshows across south Kolkata.

"I request all of you to give your response through your vote. This is a fight to protect your rights," Banerjee said before roadshows criss-crossing Jadavpur and Bhowanipore, both central to her political career.

She cautioned of alleged attempts to influence polling and asked voters to remain alert inside booths. "Do not leave immediately after casting your vote. Check VVPAT to ensure vote has been recorded in favour of candidate you chose," she said.

Dressed in her trademark white sari with blue border, Banerjee moved briskly across three stretches — Sulekha to Dhakuria, Golpark to Gariahat, and Ballygunge Phari to Gopalnagar — racing against EC 6pm deadline on last day of canvass. Pressed for time, she briefly rode pillion on a motorbike through a congested stretch to stay on schedule.

The Jadavpur stop carried personal weight. "Jadavpur is a place of struggle for me. It was the people of Jadavpur who first ensured my victory," she said. "I have always begun my final phase of campaign from here... I have come to pay my respects to this soil."

In Matua heartland, Abhishek hammers on BJP's 'betrayal'

Dwaipayan.Ghosh
@timesofindia.com

Kolkata: TMC national general secretary **Abhishek Banerjee** wound up his poll campaign at Nadia's Haringhata on Saturday with a sharp attack on BJP, saying the saffron party had "humiliated and deprived" Matuas by promising them citizenship and jobs.

Accusing BJP of shedding "crocodile tears" for the community in North 24 Parganas and Nadia, both Matua strongholds, he said: "BJP MLA Asim Sarkar said if names of Matuas are deleted, that won't be his headache. MLA and Union minister Shantanu Thakur said it will not matter if one to five lakh Matua names are deleted. Now, compare how TMC has stood by you... from SIR form fill-up kiosks to the Supreme Court, we have been with you."

"It was said those (Hindus) who came to India by Dec 31, 2024, would be granted citizenship. However, even those who have been here for 100 years had their names removed by the govt of Asim Sarkar and Shantanu Thakur. The names cleared after 'logical discrepancy' wouldn't have been possible if CM Mamata Banerjee hadn't moved SC," he said.

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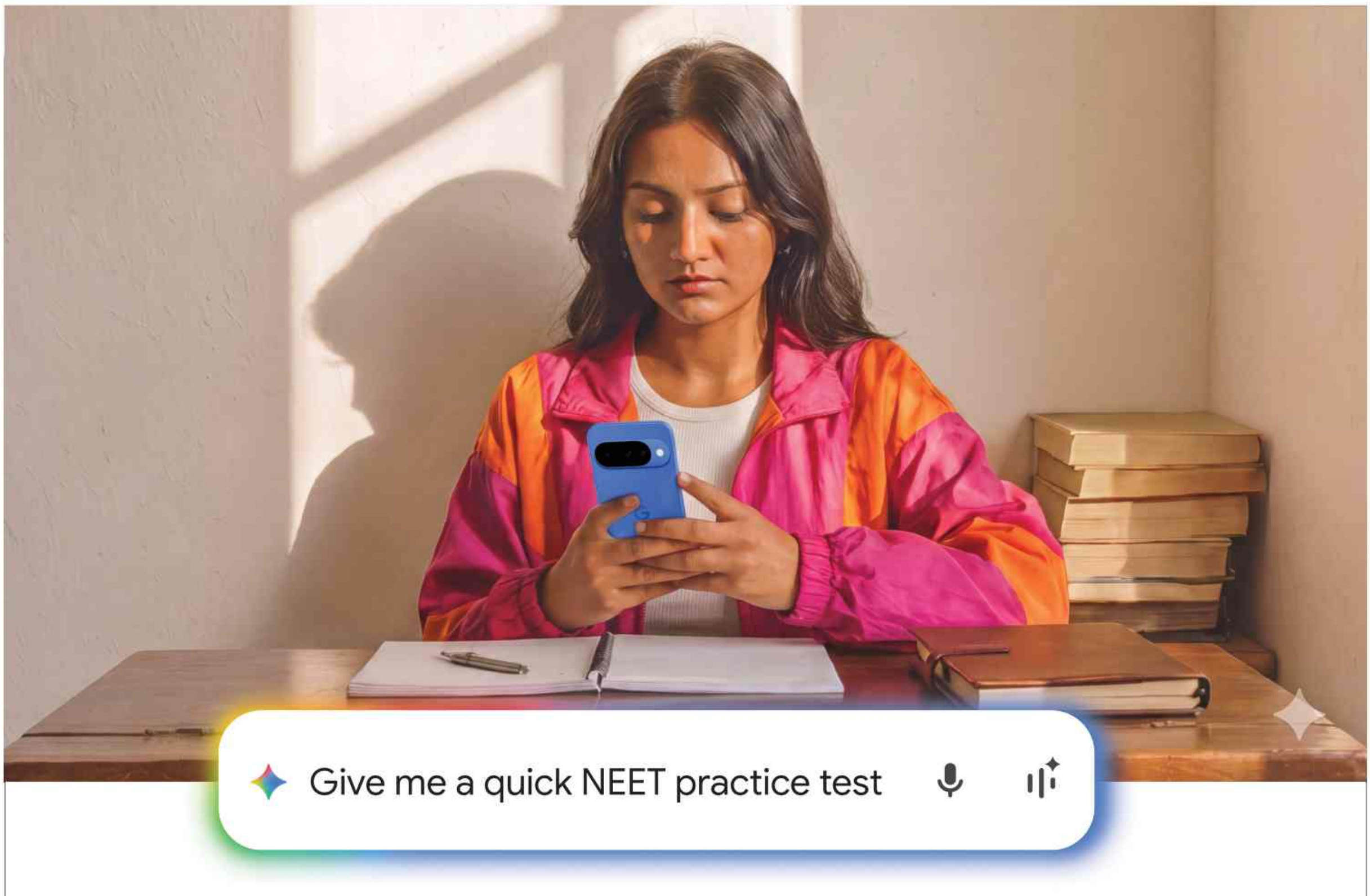
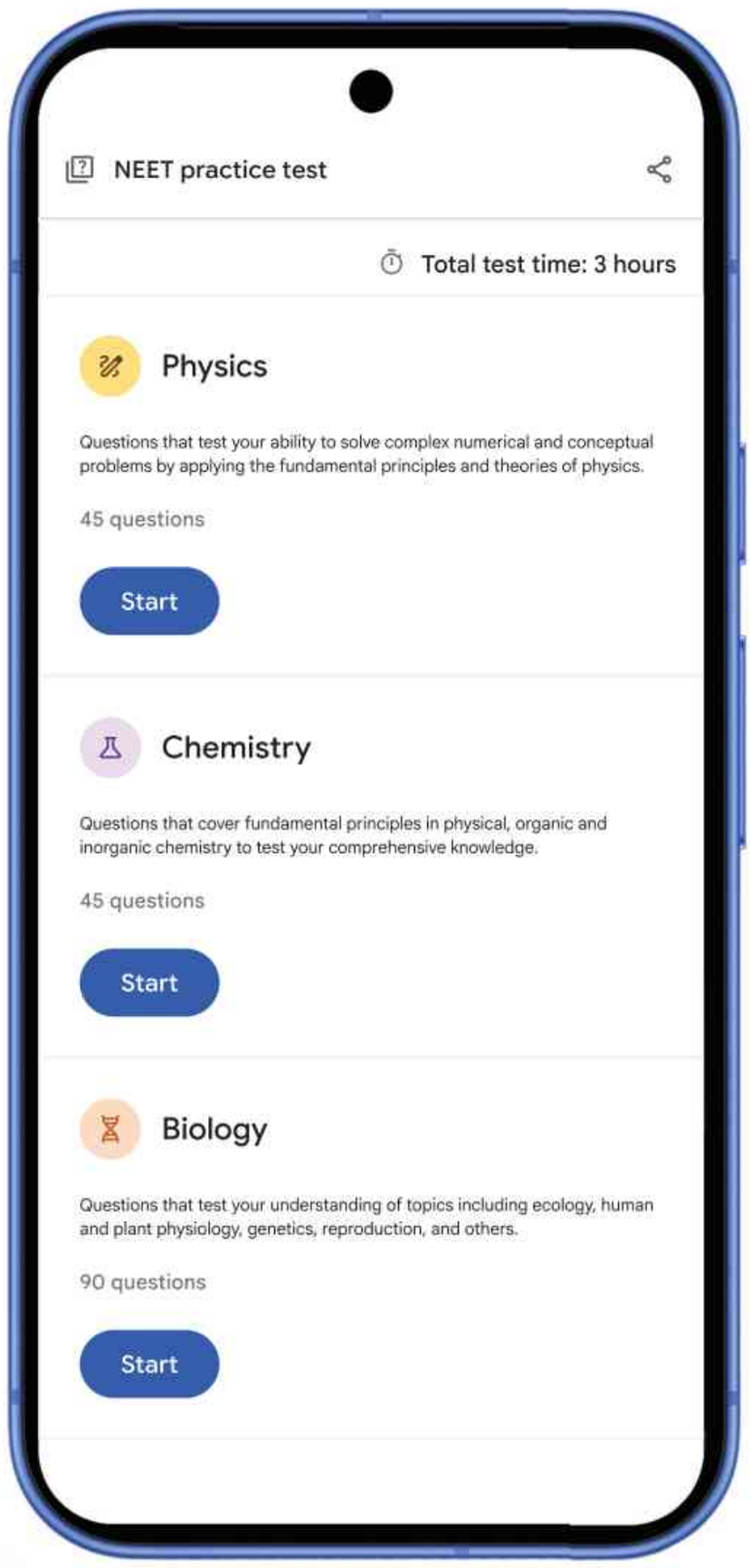
Mirabai Chanu may miss rescheduled Asian Championships in May due to a shoulder injury sustained during Nat'l Championships in Feb. Komal Kohar likely to replace Chanu, P 16



NEET mock tests, now on Google Gemini



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